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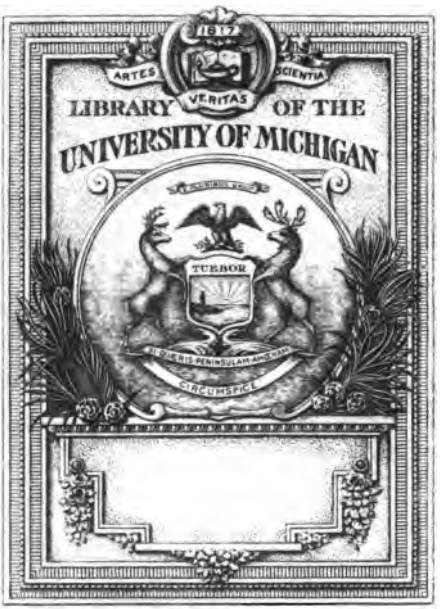
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THE GIFT OF
Prof. W. H. Hobbs

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CH.

Old Amsterdam.

HOLLAND.

BY

EDMONDO DE AMICIS,

AUTHOR OF "SPAIN," "MOROCCO," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRTEENTH EDITION OF THE ITALIAN BY

HELEN ZIMMERN.

ILLUSTRATED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MAP OF THE NETHERLANDS *End of Vol.*

LEYDEN.

LEYDEN.

THE country between the Hague and Leyden resembles that between Rotterdam and the Hague—it is a continuous green plain dotted with bright red roofs and bordered by the blue of the canals, with occasional groups of trees, windmills, and scattered herds of motionless cattle. As one goes along one seem always to be in the same spot and to be looking at places seen a thousand times before. The country was silent; the train glided along slowly, almost noiselessly; in the carriage no one spoke, at the stations no sound of voices was heard; little by little the mind fell into a state of lethargy, which made one forget where one was and whither one was going. "Every one is asleep in this country," observed Diderot when travelling in Holland; and this expression came to my lips several times in this short journey until I heard a cry of "Leyden!" when I alighted at a station as still and solitary as a convent.

Leyden, the ancient Athens of the North, the Saragossa of the Low Countries, the oldest and most glorious daughter of Holland, is one of those cities which make one thoughtful as soon as one enters

them, and which one cannot recall even after a long time without sad and pensive memories.

I had scarcely entered it before I felt the chill of a dead city. The Old Rhine crosses Leyden, dividing it into many islands joined by one hundred and fifty stone bridges, and forms large canals and creeks, which cover entire tracts where neither ship nor boat is seen, so that the town seems to be inundated rather than intersected by the water. The principal streets are very wide, and are flanked on either side by old black houses with the usual pointed gables, but in the wide streets, the squares, and cross-ways there is no one to be seen, or at best a few people scattered here and there about the wide areas, like the survivors of a town that has been depopulated by death. In the smaller streets one may walk a long while through the grass before houses with closed doors and windows, in a profound silence, which is like that of the fabulous cities whose inhabitants are sunk in deep supernatural sleep. One may pass over grass-grown bridges, along narrow canals covered with a green carpet, through little squares that seem like convent cloisters, and then may suddenly emerge into a street so wide that it might be a Parisian boulevard, to re-enter at once a labyrinth of narrow alleys. From bridge to bridge, from canal to canal, from island to island, one wanders for hours and hours, seeking always the life and bustle of ancient Leyden, and finding nothing but solitude, silence,

and water which reflects the gloomy majesty of the ruinous town.

After a long ramble I came upon a huge square where a squadron of cavalry was being drilled. An old cicerone who accompanied me stopped in the shade of a tree and told me that this square, called in Dutch *The Ruin*, records a great misfortune which befell the city of Leyden.

"Before 1807," he grumbled in bad French and in the tone of a schoolmaster, which is common to all Dutch ciceroni, "this great square was all covered with houses, and the canal which now crosses it then ran through the middle of the street. On the 12th of January, 1807, a vessel laden with gunpowder, which was stationed here, exploded and eight hundred houses with several hundred inhabitants were blown into the air, and thus the square was formed. Among those who were killed was the illustrious historian John Luzac, who was afterward buried in the church of St. Peter with a beautiful inscription, and among the buildings that were destroyed was the house of the Elzevir family, the glory of Dutch typography."

"The house of the Elzevir family!" I said to myself with pleasant surprise, and I thought of certain Italian bibliophiles whom I knew who would have been happy to press with their feet the ground on which stood that illustrious house, out of which came those little typographical masterpieces which they

search after, dream of, and caress with so much love —those tiny books that seem printed with characters of adamant, those models of elegance and precision in which a typographical error is such a wonder that it actually doubles the worth and value of the book in which it occurs—those marvels of lettering, of scrolls, of ornamental borders, of head- and tail-pieces,—of which my friends speak with bated breath and sparkling eyes.

On leaving this square I entered the Breedestraat, the longest street in Leyden, which winds through the town from one end to the other in the shape of an S. I found myself in front of the Municipal Palace, one of the most curious Dutch buildings of the sixteenth century. At first it reminds one of stage scenery, and contrasts unpleasantly with the serious aspect of the town. It is a long, low, gray building, with a bare façade, along the top of which runs a stone balustrade, out of which rise obelisks, pyramids, aërial frontispieces, ornamented with grotesque statues, which form a sort of fantastic battlement round a very steep roof. Facing the principal entrance rises a bell-tower composed of several stories, fitting one on another, and giving to the whole the appearance of a very high kiosk. On the top is an enormous iron crown in the form of an inverted balloon surmounted by a flagstaff. Over the door, which is reached by two staircases, is a Dutch inscription recording the famine suffered in

The Old Rhine, Leyden.

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the city in 1574. The inscription is composed of a hundred and thirty-one letters, corresponding to the number of days the siege lasted.

I entered the palace, and passed through its various rooms and corridors without seeing a human being and without hearing a sound that indicated that it was inhabited, until I met a porter who attached himself to me. After we crossed a large room where there were several clerks as motionless as automatons, my guide led me into the museum. The first object that caught my eye was a disjointed table, at which, if the tradition is reliable, worked that famous tailor, John of Leyden, who at the beginning of the sixteenth century turned the country topsy-turvy, as Tauchelyn of obscure memory had done five centuries earlier—that John of Leyden, head of the Anabaptists, who defended the town of Münster against the Bishop-Count of Waldeck, whose fanatic partisans elected him king; that pious prophet who kept a seraglio and had one of his wives beheaded because she grumbled at the famine; that John of Leyden, in short, who died at twenty-six years of age, torn to pieces by red-hot pincers, and whose body, put into an iron cage on the top of a tower, was devoured by ravens. He did not, however, succeed in awakening such fanaticism as that aroused by Tauchelyn, to whom women gave themselves in the presence of their husbands and mothers, persuaded that they were doing what pleased God, while

it has been restored and crowned with battlements. The hill is covered with very high oaks which conceal the tower and obstruct the view of the country; only here and there, by looking through the branches, one may see the red roofs of Leyden, the plain crossed by canals, and the steeples of the distant towns.

On the top of this tower, under the shadow of the oaks, strangers love to conjure up the memories of that siege, "the most doleful tragedy of modern times," which seems to have left upon Leyden traces of a sadness that cannot be effaced.

In 1573 the Spaniards, headed by Valdes, laid siege to Leyden. There were only a few volunteer soldiers in the city. The military command was entrusted to Van der Voes, a courageous man and a renowned Latin poet: Van der Werff was burgomaster. In a short time the besieging force constructed more than sixty forts at points through which, either by sea or land, there was an entrance into the city, and Leyden was completely surrounded. But the people did not lose courage. William of Orange sent word to them to resist at least three months, and that in this space of time he would be in a position to succor them—that the destiny of Holland depended on the fate of Leyden; and the people of Leyden promised to hold out to the end. Valdes offered them the pardon of the King of Spain if they would open their doors; they answered with a Latin

verse, "*Fistula dulce canit, volucrem dum decipit anceps*," and began to make sorties and to attack the enemy. Meanwhile, the provisions in the town were diminishing and the circle of the siege grew smaller day by day. William of Orange, who occupied the fortress of Polderwaert, between Delft and Rotterdam, seeing no other way of saving the town, conceived the plan, which was approved by the deputies, of inundating the country round Leyden by breaking the dykes of the Issel and the Meuse and of overcoming the Spaniards with water since they could not be overcome with arms. This desperate resolution was immediately put into execution. The dykes were broken in sixty places, the sluice-gates of Rotterdam and Gouda were opened, the sea began to invade the land. Meanwhile, two hundred barges were in readiness at Rotterdam, at Delftshaven, and other places to take provisions to the town as soon as the great rise of the waters which always accompanies the autumnal equinox occurred. The Spaniards, at first terrified by the inundation, were reassured when they understood the designs of the Dutch, feeling certain that the town would surrender before the waters reached the principal forts. Consequently, they carried on the siege with renewed ardor. Meantime, the people of Leyden, who began to feel the stress of famine and to lose hope that the promised help would arrive in time, sent letters by carrier-pigeons to William of Orange, who lay sick of a fever at

Amsterdam, to acquaint him with the sad state of the town. William answered, encouraging them to prolong their resistance, and assuring them that as soon as he was well he would come to relieve them. The waters advanced, the Spanish army was abandoning the lower forts, the inhabitants of Leyden continually ascended their tower to watch the sea, one day hoping and the next despairing, but they did not cease to work at the walls, to make sorties, and to repulse assaults. At last the Prince of Orange recovered, and the preparations to raise the siege of Leyden, which had flagged during his illness, were resumed with great vigor. On the 1st of September the inhabitants from the top of their tower saw the first Dutch vessel appear on the horizon of waters. It was a small fleet commanded by Admiral Boisot, bearing eight hundred Zealanders, savage men covered with scars, at home on the sea, reckless of life, and terrible in battle. They all wore crescent moons above their hats with the inscription, "Rather Turks than Papists," and formed a strange and fearful phalanx of men, resolved to save Leyden or to die in the waters. The ships advanced within five miles of the city, to the outer dyke, which the Spaniards defended. There the conflict began: the dyke was charged, carried, dashed in pieces, the sea broke through, and the Dutch vessels passed triumphantly across the breaches. It was a great step, but only the first. Behind that dyke lay yet another. The

battle began again; the second dyke was also taken and broken down, and the fleet swept on. Suddenly the wind changed and the boats were obliged to stop. It veered again, and they went on: it became contrary once more, and the fleet was again arrested. While this was taking place, within the city even the disgusting animals that the citizens were reduced to eating began to fail, the people threw themselves on the ground to lick the blood of the dead horses, women and children ate the dirt in the streets, an epidemic broke out, the houses were full of corpses, more than six thousand citizens died, and every hope of salvation was lost. A crowd of famished creatures rushed to the burgomaster, Van der Werff, and with piercing cries demanded the surrender of the town. Van der Werff refused. The populace threatened him. Then he made a sign with his hat that he wished to be heard, and in the general silence he cried, "Citizens! I have sworn to defend this city unto death, and with the help of God I will keep my oath. It is better to die of hunger than of shame. Your threats do not terrify me; I can die but once. Kill me if you will and appease your hunger with my flesh, but so long as I live do not ask me for the surrender of Leyden." The crowd, moved by these words, dispersed in silence, resigned to die, and the city continued its defence. At last, on the 1st of October, during the night, a violent equinoctial wind began to blow, the sea rose,

overflowed the ruined dykes, and furiously invaded the land. At midnight, at the very height of the storm, in total darkness, the Dutch fleet moved. Some Spanish vessels went to meet it. Then began a horrible battle among the tops of the trees and the roofs of submerged houses lighted by the flashes of the cannon-shots. The Spanish vessels were overcome, boarded, and swamped; the Zealanders jumped into the low water and pushed their boats forward with might and main; the Spanish soldiers, seized with terror, abandoned the forts, and fell by hundreds into the sea, where they were killed with sword-thrusts and grappling-irons, or were hurled headlong from roofs and dykes, routed and dispersed. One fortress only remained in the power of Valdes. The besieged once more vacillated between hope and despair; that fortress too was abandoned, and the Dutch seamen entered the city.

Here a horrible spectacle awaited them. An emaciated, ghastly populace, exhausted by hunger, crowded the sides of the canals, dragging themselves along the ground, staggering and holding out their arms. The sailors began to throw loaves of bread from the boats into the streets. Then a desperate struggle arose among these people at the point of death; many died of suffocation, others expired while devouring that first nutriment, some fell into the canals. When their first fury was finally quieted, the most exhausted satisfied, and the most urgent

needs of the town provided for, a joyful crowd of citizens, Zealanders, sailors, the national guard, soldiers, women, and children mingled together, and took the way to the cathedral, where with voices broken by sobs they sang a hymn of praise to God.

The Prince of Orange received the news of the preservation of Leyden in church at Delft, where he was assisting at divine service. The message was immediately conveyed to the preacher and announced to the congregation, who received it with a shout of joy. Although only convalescent, and notwithstanding the epidemic raging at Leyden, William insisted upon seeing his dear, brave city and journeyed thither. His entry was a triumph, his majestic and serene presence gave fresh courage to the people, his words made them forget all they had suffered. To reward the citizens for their heroic defence he gave them the choice between immunity from certain taxes and the establishment of a University. Leyden chose the University.

The inauguration festival of the University was celebrated on the 5th of February, 1575, with a solemn procession. First came a company of militia and five companies of infantry from the garrison at Leyden; behind these a car drawn by four horses bearing a woman dressed in white, representing the Gospel, while around the car were grouped the four Evangelists. Justice followed with her eyes blind-

Courtyard of the Burg, Leyden.



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folded, holding the scales and a sword. She was mounted on an unicorn and surrounded by Julian, Papinian, Ulpian, and Tribonian. Justice was succeeded by Medicine on horseback, with a treatise in one hand and in the other a wreath of medicinal herbs, accompanied by the four great doctors Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, and Theophrastus. After Medicine came Minerva, armed with shield and lance, escorted by four cavaliers who represented Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Virgil. In the intervals walked warriors dressed and armed in ancient style. The rest of the procession was formed by halberdiers, mace-bearers, musicians, officers, the new professors, magistrates, and an endless crowd. The procession passed slowly through several streets strewn with flowers, under triumphal arches, beneath tapestries and banners, until it reached a small port on the Rhine, where a great barge splendidly decorated came out to meet it, on which, under the shade of a canopy covered with laurel and orange-flowers, was seated Apollo playing the lyre, surrounded by the nine Muses singing, while Neptune, the savior of the town, held the rudder. The boat neared the shore, the fair god descended with the nine sisters, and kissed the new professors one after the other, greeting them in courteous Latin verses. After this the procession moved to the building destined for the University, where a professor of theology, the Very Reverend Caspar Kolhas, delivered an eloquent in-

augural address, which was preceded by music and followed by a splendid banquet.

It is superflous to tell how all the expectations of Leyden were realized in this University. All know how the Netherlands with generous offers attracted thither the learned men of every country: how Philosophy, driven from France, took refuge there; how it was long the safest citadel for all those who were contending for the triumph of human reason; how, in fine, it became the most famous school in Europe. The actual University is in an ancient convent. It is impossible to enter the large room of the Academic Senate without a feeling of the greatest respect. Here are seen the portraits of all the professors who succeeded each other from the foundation of the University until the present day, among whom are Justus Lipsius, Vosius, Heinsius, Gronovius, Hemsterhuys, Ruhneken, Valckenaer, the great Scaliger, whom the Netherlands invited to Leyden through Henry IV., the famous pair Gomar and Arminius, who provoked the great religious struggle which was decided by the Synod of Dordrecht, the most celebrated doctor of Leyden, Boerhaave, whose lessons Peter the Great attended, to whom invalids from all countries had recourse, and who was so well known that he received a letter from a Chinese mandarin without any address excepting "To the illustrious Boerhaave, physician in Europe."

Now this glorious University, although it still has

illustrious professors, has fallen: its students, who in former times numbered more than two thousand, are reduced to a few hundreds; the instruction given is not to be compared with that of the universities of Berlin, Munich, and Weimar. The principal cause of this decline is the large number of Dutch universities, for besides the University of Leyden there is one at Utrecht and one at Groningen, and an Athenæum at Amsterdam. The museums, libraries, and professors, if united in one town alone, would form an excellent university, but, scattered as they are, they are not sufficient to meet modern requirements. Yet it cannot be said that Holland is not persuaded that one excellent university would be much better than four mediocre institutions; on the contrary, for a long time she has called loudly for such a change. And why is it not made? O Italians, let us be consoled: it is the same all over the world. In Holland, too, the country proposes and the steeple disposes. The three university towns cry, "Let us suppress," but each says to the other, "You be suppressed," and so they go on soliciting for suppression.

But, although it has declined, the University of Leyden is still the most flourishing institution of learning in Holland, particularly because of the rich museums it has at its disposal. It would not be right, however, for me to speak superficially, as I should needs be obliged to speak, about these museums

and the admirable botanical garden. I cannot, however, forget two very curious objects that I saw in the Museum of Natural History, one of which was ridiculous, the other serious. The first, which is to be found in the anatomical room (one of the richest in Europe), is an orchestra formed of the skeletons of fifty very small mice, some of which are standing, others sitting on a double row of benches, with their tails in the air, holding violins and guitars between their paws. Music-books are perched in front of them. Each has a handkerchief and snuff-box, and holds a cigar in its mouth. The director of the orchestra gesticulates in front on a high stand. The serious object consists of some pieces of corroded wood, pierced with holes like a sponge, the fragments of palisades and of frames of the sluice-gates, which record the perils of an overwhelming disaster which threatened Holland toward the end of the last century. A mollusk, a species of wood-worm called *taret*, brought, it is believed, by some vessel from tropical seas, multiplied with marvellous rapidity in the North Sea, and ate away the woodwork of the dykes and locks to such a degree that if the work of destruction had continued a little longer the dykes would have given way and the sea would have submerged the entire country. The discovery of this peril filled Holland with alarm; the people ran to the churches, the whole country set to work. They bound the woodwork of the locks with iron, they

fortified the tottering dykes, they protected the palisades with nails, stones, sea-weed, and brickwork, and partly by these means, but chiefly by reason of the severity of the climate, which destroyed the dangerous animal, a calamity which at first was thought inevitable was averted. A worm had made Holland tremble—an arduous triumph denied to the storms of the sea and the wrath of Philip.

Another very precious ornament to Leyden is the Japanese Museum of Doctor Siebold, a German by birth, a physician of the Dutch colony of the island of Desima, a man who, according to romantic tradition, was the first to obtain leave from the Emperor of Japan to enter that mysterious empire. This favor he was granted as a reward for curing one of the Emperor's daughters. According to a more probable tradition, he entered the country by stealth, and did not get out again until he had done penance for his daring by nine months' imprisonment, while several nobles who aided him paid for their kindness by the loss of their heads. However this may be, Dr. Siebold's museum is perhaps the finest collection of its kind in Europe. An hour passed in those rooms is a journey to Japan. One can there follow the life of a Japanese family through the whole course of a day, from their toilette to the table, from paying calls to the theatre, from town to country. There are houses, temples, idols, portable altars, musical instruments, household utensils, agricultural tools, the gar-

ments worn by workmen and fishermen, bronze chandeliers formed by a stork standing upright on a tortoise, vases, jewels, daggers ornamented with wonderful delicacy; birds, tigers, rabbits, ivory buffaloes, all reproduced feather for feather, hair for hair, with the patience with which that ingenious and patient people is gifted.

Among the objects that most impressed me was a colossal face of Buddha, which at first sight made me draw back, and which I can still see before me with its contracted visage and inscrutable expression, representing imbecility, delirium, and spasm, disgusting and terrifying at the same time. Behind this face of Buddha I still see the puppets of the Java theatre, real creations of a disordered brain, which tire the eye and confuse the mind: king, queen, and monstrous warriors, images of beings partly man, beast, and plant, with arms that end in branches, legs that become ornaments, leaves that spread out into hands, breasts from which spring plants, noses that burst into bloom, faces pierced with holes, eyes aslant, pupils at the nape of the neck, distorted limbs, dragons' wings, sirens' tails, hair of snakes, fishes' mouths, elephants' tusks, gilded wrinkles, twisting necks, tracery, colored arabesques, flourishes which no language can describe and no mind remember. On leaving the museum I seemed to be awaking from one of those feverish dreams in which we see uncanny objects that are continually

transformed with furious rapidity into other things that have no name.

There is nothing else to be seen at Leyden. The mill in which Rembrandt was born is no longer in existence. There is no trace of the houses where lived the painters Dou, Steen, Metsu, Van Goyen, and that Otto van Veen who had the honor and the misfortune as well of being the master of Paul Rubens. The castle of Endegeest is still standing where Boerhaave and Descartes lodged, the last for several years, while he wrote his principal works on philosophy and mathematics. The castle is on the road that leads from Leyden to the village of Katwyk, where the Old Rhine, gathering its various branches into one stream, flows into the sea.

The second time I was at Leyden I wished to go and see this marvellous river die. When I crossed the Old Rhine for the first time in that adventurous trip to the dunes, I stopped on the bridge asking myself whether that humble little watercourse were really the same river that I had seen hurling itself with a fearful crash from the rocks of Schaffhausen, majestically spreading before Mayence, sweeping triumphantly past the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, dashing its sonorous waves against the foot of the Seven Mountains, and reflecting in its course gothic cathedrals, princely castles, hills covered with flowers, high rocks, famous ruins, cities, forests, gardens—everywhere covered with ships, dotted with boats,

and hailed with song and music. With these thoughts in my mind, with my eyes fixed on that little river enclosed between two bare desert banks, I several times repeated, "Is this that Rhine?" The changes undergone in the death-agony of this great river in Holland arouse a feeling of pity such as one feels for the misfortunes and inglorious end of a once-powerful and happy nation. Already in the neighborhood of Emmerich, before it crosses the Dutch frontier, its banks have lost all their beauty; it flows in great curves between vast tedious plains, which seem to announce the arrival of old age. At Millingen it flows entirely in Dutch territory; a little farther on it divides. The larger branch actually loses its name and empties into the Meuse; the other, insulted by the name of Pannerden Canal, flows on until it approaches the town of Arnhem, where it again divides into two branches. One of these under a borrowed name empties into the Zuyder Zee; the other, still called in pity the Lower Rhine, reaches the village of Durstede, where it divides for the third time. One of the branches, changing its name like a fugitive, flows into the Meuse near to Rotterdam; the other, still called Rhine, but having the absurd nickname of *crooked*, reaches Utrecht with fatigue, where for the fourth time it is divided into two parts, the caprice of an old man in his second childhood. On one side, forswearing its ancient name, it drags itself along as far as Muden, where it joins the Zuyder

The State House, Leyden.



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Zee; on the other, under the name of Old Rhine, or rather, more contemptuously, Old, it flows slowly as far as the town of Leyden, whose streets it crosses without giving any indication of life; then, becoming one simple canal, it perishes miserably in the North Sea.

But a few years ago even this pitiful end was not allowed to it. From the year 839, when a furious tempest filled its mouth with banks of sand, until the beginning of this century the Old Rhine lost itself in the sand before arriving at the sea, and covered a vast part of the country with ponds and marshes. Under the reign of Louis Bonaparte the waters were collected in a large canal protected by three enormous locks, and since that time the Rhine has flowed directly to the sea. These locks are the most imposing monuments in Holland, and perhaps the finest hydraulic works in Europe. The dykes that protect the mouth of the canal, the walls, the piles, the gates, all together present the appearance of a cyclopean fortress, against which not the sea only, but the united strength of all seas, might hurl itself as against a mountain of granite. When the tide is high, the doors are closed to keep the sea from invading the land; when the tide ebbs, they are opened to allow the waters of the Rhine that have accumulated to flow out, and then a mass of three thousand cubic metres passes through the gates in one little second. On the days of great storms concession

is made to the sea. The gates of the first lock are left open, and the furious waves burst into the canal like a hostile enemy into a breach, but they beat in vain against the formidable doors of the second lock, behind which Holland cries to them, "You shall come no farther." This huge fortress, which stands on a desert coast, defending a dying river and a fallen city from the ocean, has about it a certain solemnity which commands admiration and respect.

In the evening I saw Leyden again. It was dark and silent like an abandoned city. I reverently bade it adieu, cheered by the thought that Haarlem, the town of landscape-painters and flowers, was at hand.

HAARLEM.

HAARLEM.

THE railway from Leyden to Haarlem runs along a strip of ground between the sea and the bottom of the great lake that thirty years ago covered all the country extending between Haarlem, Leyden, and Amsterdam. A stranger who passes over that road with an old map printed before 1850 searches in vain for the Lake of Haarlem. This very thing happened to me, and, as the circumstance seemed rather strange, I turned to a neighbor and asked him about the lake that had disappeared. All the travellers laughed, and the one I had questioned gave me this laconic answer: "We have drunk it."

The history of this marvellous work is a subject worthy of a poem.

The great Lake of Haarlem, formed by the union of four very small lakes, and enlarged by inundations, already at the end of the seventeenth century had a circumference of forty-four thousand metres and was called a sea, and, in fact, it was a tempestuous sea on which fleets of seventy ships had fought and many vessels had been wrecked. Thanks to the high dunes which extend along the coast,

this great mass of water had not been able to join itself to the North Sea and convert Northern Holland into an island, but on the opposite side it threatened the country, the towns, and the villages, and kept the inhabitants continually on the watch. As early as 1640 a Dutch engineer called Leeghwater published a book proving the possibility and utility of draining this dangerous lake, but the enterprise did not find promoters, partly because of the difficulties of the method he proposed, and partly because the country was still occupied in the struggle with Spain. The political events which followed the peace of 1648 and the disastrous wars with France and England caused Leeghwater's project to be forgotten until the beginning of the present century. At last, about 1819, the question was discussed again and new studies and proposals were made, but the execution of the plan was deferred to some future time, and perhaps would never have been carried out if an unforeseen event had not brought matters to a crisis. On the 9th of November, 1836, the waters of the Sea of Haarlem, driven by a furious wind, overflowed the dykes and hurled themselves against the gates of Amsterdam, and the following month invaded Leyden and the surrounding country. It was the final challenge. Holland took up the gauntlet, and in 1839 the States-General condemned the rash sea to exile from the face of the earth. The work was commenced in 1840. They began by sur-

rounding the lake with a double dyke and a wide canal for the purpose of collecting the waters which afterward, by means of other canals, were to be carried to the sea. The lake contained seven hundred and twenty-four million cubic metres of water, besides the rain-water and the water that filtered into it, which during the draining was found to consist of thirty-six million cubic metres a year. The engineers had calculated that they would have to pass thirty-six million two hundred thousand cubic meters of water each month from the lake to the draining canal. Three enormous steam-engines were sufficient for this work. One was placed at Haarlem, another between Haarlem and Amsterdam, the third near Leyden. This last was named Leeghwater, in honor of the engineer who had first proposed the draining of the lake. I saw it, for not only has it been preserved, but it still works occasionally to draw off the rain-water and the water of filtration into the draining canal. So it is also with the other two engines, which are exactly like the first. They are enclosed in large round embattled towers, each of which is encircled by a row of arched windows, from which extend eleven large arms that rise and fall with majestic slowness and set in motion eleven pumps, each capable of raising the enormous weight of sixty-six cubic metres of water at every stroke. This is the appearance of these three huge iron vampires, which have sucked up a sea. The first to be put in motion was the

Leeghwater, on the 7th of June, 1849. After a short time the two other engines began to work, and from that moment the level of the lake was lowered a centimetre every day. After thirty-nine months of work the gigantic undertaking was accomplished; the engines had pumped out nine hundred and twenty-four million two hundred and sixty-six thousand one hundred and twelve cubic metres of water; the Sea of Haarlem had disappeared. This work, which cost seven million two hundred and forty thousand three hundred and sixty-eight florins, gave Holland a new province of eighteen thousand five hundred hectares of land. From every part of Holland settlers crowded in. At first they sowed only colza, which brought forth a marvellous crop; then all kinds of plants were tried, and all succeeded. As the population is composed of people from every province, all systems of cultivation vie with each other there. Farmers from Zealand, Brabant, Friesland, Groningen, and North Holland are met with, and all the dialects of the United Provinces are spoken; it is a little Holland within Holland.

As one approaches Haarlem, villas and gardens become more frequent, but the city remains hidden by trees, above which peeps only the very high steeple of the cathedral, surmounted by a large iron crown shaped like the bulb of a Muscovite tower. On entering the town, one sees on every side canals, windmills, drawbridges, fishing-smacks, and houses

reflected in the water, and when after a short walk one comes out into a wide square, one exclaims with delight and surprise, "Oh, here we are really in Holland!"

At one angle stands the cathedral, a high bare building, covered by a roof in the shape of an acute prism, which seems to cleave the sky like a sharp axe. Opposite the cathedral is the old Municipal Palace, crowned with battlements, with a roof like an overturned ship and a balcony that looks like a bird-cage hung over the door. One part of its front is hidden by two queer little houses resembling somewhat a theatre, a church, and a firework castle. On the other sides of the square are houses of the most capricious designs of Dutch architecture—pitching forward, black, red, or vermilion—their fronts studded with white stones and resembling so many chess-boards. A row of trees is planted almost against the wall, and hides all the windows of the second story. Next to the cathedral stands an eccentric building which is used for public auctions, a monument of fantastic architecture—half red, half white, all steps, frontispieces, obelisks, pyramids, bas-reliefs, nameless ornaments in the form of a centre-table, of chandeliers and extinguishers, which seem to have been thrown by chance against the building. Altogether, it has the appearance of an Indian pagoda which by an aberration of Spanish taste has been transformed into a Dutch house by a tipsy architect.

But the strangest thing is an ugly bronze statue in the midst of the square, which bears the inscription: "Laurentius Johannis filius Costerus, Typographiæ litteris mobilibus e metallo fusis inventor." "What!" exclaims the ignorant stranger,—"What is this? Was not Gutenberg the inventor of printing? Who is this pretender—this Costerus?"

This Costerus, Laurens Janszoon by name, was called Coster because he was a sexton, for which Coster is the Dutch word. Tradition relates that Coster, born at Haarlem near the end of the fourteenth century, while walking one day in the fine wood which is situated to the south of the town, broke off a branch of a tree, and to amuse his children cut some raised letters on it with his knife; this occurrence first suggested to his mind the idea of printing. In fact, when he returned home he dipped these coarse models into ink, pressed them upon paper, made new trials, brought the letters to greater perfection, printed entire pages, and at last, after arduous studies, fatigues, disappointment, and persecution to which he was subjected by copyists and imitators, he succeeded in producing his great work, which was the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, printed in the German language, in double columns with Gothic type. This *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, which is on view at the Municipal Palace, is partly printed from wooden blocks and partly in movable type. It is dated 1440, the earliest date which can be admitted

for the invention of movable type, in which, after all, the invention of printing consists. If we believe in this *Speculum*, Gutenberg is out of the question. But the proofs? Here begin the difficulties of the Dutch inventor. Among his belongings which are preserved in the Municipal Palace there are no movable types, and every other kind of instrument, written document, and form of attestation is lacking to prove undoubtedly that this *Speculum*, or at least the part printed with movable type, was printed by Coster. How do the supporters of the Dutch inventor answer for this deficiency? Here another legend comes to light: On Christmas night of the year 1440, while Coster, old and sick, was assisting at midnight mass, praying God to give him strength to bear persecutions and to struggle on against the envy of his enemies, one of his workmen, whom he had employed after taking his oath not to betray the secret of his invention, stole all his tools, types, and books. Coster at once on his return discovered what had taken place, and died of anguish. According to the legend, this sacrilegious thief was Faustus of Mayence, or the eldest brother of Gutenberg, and thus it is explained why the glory of the invention has passed from Holland to Germany, and how the statue of poor Coster has a right to stand in the square at Haarlem like an avenging spectre. An entire library has been written by Holland and Germany in this dispute, which lasted for centuries, and until a few

years ago it was uncertain whether the traveller was to raise his hat to the statue at Mayence or to that at Haarlem. Germany repulsed the pretensions of the Dutch with supreme disdain, and Holland obstinately ignored the claims of Germany, although with waning confidence. But now it seems probable that the question has been settled for ever. Doctor Van der Linde, a Hollander, has published a book entitled "The Legend of Coster," after reading which even the Dutch do not believe that Coster was the inventor of printing any more than that Tubal Cain discovered the use of iron or that Prometheus stole the fire from heaven. Consequently, the statue of poor Coster may some day be fused into a fine cannon to admonish the pirates of Sumatra. But to Holland will always remain in the field of typography the uncontested glory of the Elzevirs, the enviable honor of printing almost all the great works of the century of Louis XIV., of diffusing through Europe the French philosophy of the eighteenth century, of welcoming, defending, and propagating human thought when it was proscribed by despotism and abjured by fear.

In the Municipal Palace at Haarlem is a picture-gallery which might be called Frans Hal's Museum, because the masterpieces of this great artist are its principal ornament. Hals was born, as every one knows, at Malines at the end of the sixteenth century; he lived many years at Haarlem when land-

On the Spaarne, Haarlem.



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scape-painting flourished there, in the company of the other illustrious Dutch artists, Ruysdael, Wijnants, Brouwer, and Cornelis Bega. The large principal room of the gallery is almost entirely occupied by his paintings. On entering one finds one's self under a singular illusion. One seems to be entering a banqueting-hall, where are a number of tables, as was customary at all large banquets; at the sound of footsteps all the guests have turned to look at the stranger. There are groups of officers, of archers, of hospital administrators, all life-size, some seated, some standing round tables which are splendidly decorated, and all have their faces turned toward the spectator, as if they were in position in front of a camera. Everywhere one turns one sees nothing but fat, healthy good-natured faces, and frank eyes which seem to ask, "Do you recognize me?" And so real is the expression of the faces that one seems to recognize them all, to know who they are, and to have met them several times in the streets of Leyden and the Hague. This truth of expression, the jollity of the scene, the rich full dress of the seventeenth century, the arms, the tables, and the fact that there are no other pictures near to call one's thoughts to other times, make one seem really to be looking at the Holland of two hundred years ago, to feel the surroundings of that great century, and to live in the midst of those strong, sincere, cordial people. We are no longer in the room of a museum: we seem

to be taking part in the representation of an historical comedy, and should not be at all surprised to see Maurice of Orange or Frederick Henry appear before us. The most remarkable of these pictures represents nineteen archers grouped round their colonel. It is a masterpiece of the high Dutch school: the design is grand and bold, the coloring warm and brilliant; it is a work worthy of standing beside the famous "Banquet of the National Guard" by Van der Helst. Besides other pictures by other artists, I remember one by Peeter Brueghel the Younger—a comic illustration of more than eighty Flemish proverbs, which I cannot recall without laughing. But it is a picture which cannot be described for many good reasons.

In one of the rooms of the gallery is preserved the banner that belonged to the famous heroine Kanau Hasselaer, Haarlem's Joan of Arc, who in 1572 fought at the head of three hundred armed Amazons against the Spaniards, who were besieging the town. The defence of Haarlem, although not crowned with victory, was no less glorious than that of Leyden. The town was surrounded with old walls and crumbling towers, and besides the legion of women did not contain more than four thousand armed defenders. The Spaniards, after they had cannonaded the walls for three days, advanced confidently to the assault, but were repulsed by a torrent of bullets, rocks, boiling oil, and flaming pitch, and were forced to resign

themselves to a regular siege. The town was relieved by the country-people, men, women, and children, who, favored by the December mists, glided over the ice with their sledges and provided the inhabitants with provisions of food and ammunition. William of Orange did all in his power to compel the Spaniards to raise the siege. But fortune did not smile on him. The three thousand Dutch soldiers who were first sent forward were defeated, the prisoners were hanged, and an officer was put to death suspended head downward from the gallows. Another attempt to give assistance met with the same fate: the Spaniards cut off the head of an officer who was their prisoner and threw it into the town with an offensive inscription. The citizens in their turn threw into the enemy's camp a tub containing eleven Spanish prisoners' heads and a note saying, "The ten heads are sent to the Duke of Alva in payment of his tax of tenths, with one head for interest." Fierce battles followed each other in rapid succession, mixed with explosions of mines and countermines in the heart of the earth, until the 28th of January, when a hundred and seventy sledges loaded with bread and powder were brought into the town by way of the Lake of Haarlem. Then Don Frederick, the leader of the Spaniards, began to despair, and was on the point of raising the siege, but the Duke of Alva, his father, commanded him to persist. It began to thaw, and it became difficult to carry pro-

visions to the town; the citizens began to suffer famine. On the 25th of March they made a sortie, in which they burnt three hundred tents and took seven cannon, but the results of this victory were counteracted by a defeat which William's fleet suffered in a battle with the Spanish navy in the Lake of Haarlem. The defeat of the fleet carried despair to the besieged. In the month of June they were already reduced to the last horrors of famine. At the beginning of July they tried in vain to come to terms with the enemy; on the 8th, five thousand Dutch volunteers, sent by William of Orange to succor the town, were routed, and a prisoner with his nose and ears cut off was sent to Haarlem with the tidings. Then the citizens decided to form a compact legion, with their women and children in the centre, and, rushing out of the walls, to try to force passage through the middle of the enemy's camp. Don Frederick, when he heard of this project, hypocritically promised to pardon the inhabitants if the town surrendered without delay. The town surrendered, the Spaniards entered, slew all the soldiers in the garrison, beheaded a thousand citizens, tied two hundred others together, and threw them, two by two, into the lake. The Spanish army paid for this Pyrrhic victory, obtained by treachery and disgraced by slaughter, with twelve thousand men.

From the picture-gallery I went to the cathedral, in the hope of hearing Christian Müller's famous

organ played. It is said to be the largest organ in the world, and among its glories is enumerated the honor of having been played on by Handel and by a charming boy of ten years of age called Mozart. The church, founded toward the end of the fifteenth century, is as white and bare as a mosque. It has a very high ceiling of cedar-wood, which is supported by twenty-eight light columns. In a wall there still may be seen a cannon-ball from the siege of 1573; in the middle is a monument consecrated to the memory of the engineer Conrad, builder of the locks of Katwijk, and of his colleague Brunings, "the protector of Holland against the fury of the sea and the might of the tempests." Behind the choir the great poet Bilderdijk lies buried. Some little models of warships recording the fifth Crusade, which was led by Count William I. of Holland, are hung from an arch, and near the pulpit is the tomb of Coster. The organ, supported by porphyry columns, covers one entire wall from the pavement to the roof; it has four keyboards, sixty-four registers, and five thousand pipes, some of which are twice as high as a Dutch house. At that moment there were several strangers present, the organist did not delay, and I was able to hear "the cannon of God sing," as Victor Hugo expressed it. As I am not familiar with this art, I cannot tell in what respects the organ of the cathedral of Haarlem differs from that of St. Paul's in London or from the organs of the cathedrals of Freiburg and

Seville. I heard the usual clang that announces the battle, a formidable tumult of cannon-shots, of cries of the wounded, and the victorious blasts of trumpets, which withdrew from valley to valley until they were lost in the distant mountains. Then commenced a peaceful harmony of flutes, clarions, and pastoral songs, which infused into the heart all the sweetness of the life of the fields. Suddenly the storm broke, thunderbolts fell, and the foundations of the church trembled. Then the tempest was stilled to the sound of the tremulous and solemn song of a legion of angels advancing slowly from an immense distance and dispersing among the clouds, cursed by an army of demons who bellowed from the entrails of the earth. After this followed an air from the *Fille de Madame Angot*, which persuaded us that it had all been a joke and that the organist was recommending himself to the courtesy of strangers.

From the summit of the steeple the eye surveys all the beautiful country of Haarlem, dotted with woods, windmills, and villages. I saw the two large canals stretching to Leyden and Amsterdam, furrowed by long rows of sail-boats. The steeples of Amsterdam appeared in the distance. I could look over the plain of what was once the Lake of Haarlem, the village of Bloemendael, surrounded by cottages and gardens, the bare downs which defend this little terrestrial paradise from the storms, and beyond the downs the North Sea, which appeared like a luminous

livid streak across the vapors of the horizon. On leaving the church I turned down a street and walked about the town at random.

Although in many respects Haarlem resembles all other Dutch cities, it has an individual character which stamps it distinctly on the memory. It is a pretty compact town, in which a traveller feels a much greater wish than elsewhere in Holland to have the arm of his wife or of some pleasant lady friend tucked under his own. It is a woman's town. A wide water-course called the Spaarne, which serves as a draining canal between the waters of the ancient Lake of Haarlem and the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee, crosses the city, dividing it into several parts and surrounding it like the moat of a fortress. The internal canals are bordered on either side by large trees, which almost form a green arch above the water, so that every canal seems like a lake in a garden, and the barges and boats glide along in the shade as if they were out for pleasure rather than business. All the streets are paved with bricks, all the houses are of brick, so that one sees nothing but red, red, eternal red, to right, to left, above, below, everywhere one looks,—as if the town had been cut out of a mountain of blood-colored jasper. A large number of houses have gables with eight, ten, and even sixteen steps, like churches that children cut out of paper with scissors. Very few looking-glasses are seen, shop signs are rare, and nothing is hung from

the windows. The streets are so clean that one hardly dares to knock off the ashes of one's cigar. For a long way not a living soul is met, except perhaps a girl of twelve or fourteen going to school alone, with her hair down her back and her books under her arm. There is no clank of machinery, no rumble of carts, no cries of hucksters and peddlers. The entire town has an indefinable, aristocratic reserve, a modest coquetry which piques one's curosity, and one walks on and on, as if by so doing one may discover some charming secret which the whole town is trying to conceal from strangers.

A beautiful forest of beech trees extends to the south. It is believed to be the remnant of an immense forest which originally covered a great part of Holland. It is crossed by avenues and is full of pavilions, coffee-houses, and club-rooms. In the middle it opens into a very pretty park containing a herd of deer. In a lovely shady part of the wood stands a small monument erected in 1823 in honor of Laurens Coster, who, according to the legend, here cut those famous beech branches out of which he carved the first letters. I walked round all the shady recesses of the wood, met a boy who greeted me with a polite "*Bonjour*," turning his face away from me. I asked the way of a girl who wore a golden circle round her head, and she blushed as red as a peony; I borrowed a light from a peasant reading a newspaper. I passed near a lady on horse-

back, who looked at me with two eyes which were as light as the serene blue sky—then I turned toward the entrance of the wood, where there is a gallery of modern Dutch paintings which I have no remorse in passing over in silence.

It will, however, be well to observe, *apropos* of this gallery, that Dutch painting has recently made great progress in many respects. The favorite style is still the small landscape, and in this field there is no change, but the painting of home-life has been raised into a higher sphere. It has left the rabble for the middle class; it has abandoned the tavern life to devote itself lovingly to those sober, severe, and courageous fishermen who toil and suffer in silence on the Dutch coast from Helder to the mouth of the Meuse: it has forgotten the orgies and the low dance, and now represents sailors departing for the herring-banks, their wives waving them a last farewell from the shore, and crying "God be with you!" a fisherman returning after a long voyage to his dear Scheveningen, and his children running to meet him with open arms; an angry sea and the little family of the sailor with their eyes filled with tears gazing anxiously from the top of the dunes for a black speck on the dark horizon. Slavish imitation of detail has disappeared, and painting has become bolder and wider in scope. Few artists leave their fatherland to study, and those who do go out lose their national character; but most of them re-

main, and their paintings—above all, their landscapes —are now, as in times past, a faithful reflection of the country, an original, modest style of art, full of melancholy sweetness and repose.

Near the wood is the garden of Herr Krelage, where the finest tulips in Holland are grown.

This word "tulip" recalls one of the strangest popular follies that has ever existed, which showed itself in Holland about the middle of the seventeenth century. The country at that time had reached the height of its prosperity: lavish expenditure had taken the place of parsimony; the houses of the rich, which even at the beginning of the century were extremely modest, had been transformed into small palaces; velvet, silk, and pearls had substituted the patriarchal simplicity of dress. Holland had become vain, ambitious, and lavish. After they had filled their houses with pictures, carpets, china, and precious objects from every country in Europe and Asia, the rich manufacturers of the great Dutch cities began to spend large sums in ornamenting their gardens with tulips, the flower that of all others best satisfies the innate greed for bright colors that the Dutch nation has always manifested. This search after tulips rapidly promoted their cultivation. Gardens were laid out everywhere, experiments were made, new varieties of the favorite flower were sought for. The passion became general: on every side unheard-of tulips budded forth in curious shapes,

impossible shades, unexpected unions of colors, full of contrasts, caprices, and surprises. The prices rose wonderfully: a new style of marking, a new shape of those cherished petals, meant a fortune. Hundreds of people gave themselves up to this culture with the fury of maniacs, and the whole country talked of nothing but petals, colors, bulbs, flower-pots, and seeds. This fad reached such a height that all Europe was laughing at it. The bulbs of the rarest tulips brought fabulous prices; some cost as much as a house, a farm, a windmill, and were given as dowries to the daughters of wealthy families. In one town, I do not know which, two cartloads of corn, four cartloads of barley, four oxen, twelve sheep, two pipes of wine, four casks of beer, a thousand pounds of cheese, a complete suit of clothes, and a silver bowl were offered for one bulb. The bulb of a tulip called Admiral Liefkenskock was sold for eight hundred francs. Another bulb of a tulip called Semper Augustus was bought for thirteen thousand Dutch florins. A bulb, Admiral Enkhuyzen, fetched more than two thousand crowns. Once when there were only two bulbs of Semper Augustus in the whole of Holland, one at Amsterdam, the other at Haarlem, an offer was made for one of them of four thousand six hundred florins, a splendid carriage, and two roan horses with their finest harness, yet this offer was refused. Another bidder offered twelve acres of land, and he too was refused. In the regis-

ter of Alkmaar it is recorded that in 1637 there was a sale in that town of a hundred and twenty tulips for the benefit of the Orphan Asylum, and that this sale realized a hundred and eighty thousand francs. Then the Dutch began to speculate in flowers, and especially in tulips, as men speculate in stocks. Brokers sold bulbs which they did not possess for enormous sums, agreeing to provide them on a certain day, and they made bargains for a much greater number of tulips than the whole country of Holland could provide. It is said that one town alone sold twenty millions of francs' worth, and that one of the Amsterdam brokers gained more than sixty-eight thousand florins in four months. On one side they sold what they did not possess, on the other what they could never have had; the market passed from one hand to another, the difference was paid, and the bulbs by which many were enriched or impoverished bloomed only in the imagination of the merchants. At last matters reached such a stage that many buyers refused to pay the prices agreed upon, and lawsuits and confusion followed, so that at last the government decreed that these obligations should be considered as ordinary debts and made payable by law. Then prices suddenly fell to fifty florins for the Semper Augustus, and the scandalous traffic ceased.

Flower-culture is no longer a mania, but a labor of love, and the city of Haarlem is its chief temple.

The Amsterdam Gate, Haarlem.



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Haarlem still provides a great part of Europe and South America with flowers. The town is surrounded with gardens which at the end of April and the beginning of May are covered with myriads of tulips, hyacinths, carnations, primroses, anemones, ranunculi, camellias, cowslips, cacti, and geraniums —a rich garland encircling the city, from which travellers of every part of the world cull a posy as they pass. The hyacinth of late years has risen in favor, but the tulip is still the king of the flower-beds and the supreme glory of Holland. I should have to change my pen for the brush of Van Huysum or Menendez to describe the pomp of those bold, luxurious, brilliant colors: if the sensation of sight may be compared to that of hearing, I should say that they are like shouts of joy and the laughter of love in the green silence of the gardens, and that they turn the head like the sonorous music of a ball.

Here are the tulips called the Duke of Toll, the tulips which are called simple earlies, of which there are more than six hundred varieties, the double earlies, the late, which are divided into unicolored, fine, superfine, and the improved. The fine, again, are subdivided into violet, rose, and variegated. Then there is the monster or parrot species, the hybrids, the thieves, classified into a thousand orders of nobility and excellence, tinted with every shade that the human mind can imagine, spotted, striped, fluted,

variegated, with wavy, fringed, and crimped leaves, decorated with silver and gold medals, distinguished by a thousand names of generals, artists, birds, rivers, poets, cities, queens, and by a thousand affectionate and presumptuous adjectives which record their metamorphoses, their adventures, and their triumphs, and leave in the mind a sweet confusion of beautiful images and gentle thoughts.

After this it seemed to me that I might honestly leave for Amsterdam, where an irresistible curiosity was drawing me. I had already put my foot on the step and fixed my eye on a comfortable seat beside the window of the railway carriage, when I felt a jerk at my coat-tail, and turning round saw the spectre of one of my courteous Italian critics, who said to me in a tone of reproof, "But tell me, the commerce, industries, and manufacturies of Haarlem, where have you left them?"

"Ah, it is true," I answered; "you are one of those persons who wish for a book to contain descriptions, and be a guide, dictionary, treatise, index, and statistical record all in one? Well, I will content you. Know, then, that at Haarlem there is a very rich museum of physical, chemical, optical, and hydraulic instruments, left to the town by a certain Peter Teyler van der Hulst, with a sum to be devoted every year to scientific competitions; a celebrated foundry of Greek and Hebrew characters; and several fine manufactories of cotton goods founded

under the patronage of King William II.; laundries which are famous all over Holland, and—"

At this moment the whistle for departure sounded.

"One moment!" cried my critic, trying to keep me at the window. "What is the size of the electric machines in Teyler's museum? And how much cotton cloth do the manufactories produce a year? And what soap is used in the laundries?"

"Ah, leave me in peace!" I cried, shutting the door; the train was already in motion. "Do you not know the proverb that he who bears the cross cannot sing?"

And now for thee, Amsterdam of the ninety islands! Venice of the North! Queen of the Zuyder Zee!

AMSTERDAM.

AMSTERDAM.

If two travellers, one a poet and the other an engineer, were to travel together for the first time from Haarlem to Amsterdam, a curious and unusual circumstance would occur: the engineer would feel himself something of a poet, and the poet would wish he was an engineer. Such is this strange country, in which to stir the imagination and arouse enthusiasm a writer has only to enumerate the kilometres, the cubic metres of water, and the years of labor. Hence a poem on Holland would be but a poor concern without an appendix stocked with figures, and the report of an engineer would require only verse and rhyme to become a splendid epic.

As soon as we left Haarlem the train crossed a fine iron bridge of six arches which spans the Spaarne, and the bridge, when the train has passed, opened in the middle as if by enchantment, and left a gap for ships to glide through. Two men, at a sign from the foreman, by working the proper machinery can in two minutes detach two arches from the bridge, and when another train approaches can put them in place again with equal rapidity. Soon after we had

crossed the bridge we saw the waters of the Y sparkling on the horizon.

Here one feels more keenly than ever a certain sense of uneasiness which often attends those who are travelling in Holland for the first time. The railroad runs along a strip of ground separating the the bottom of the ancient Sea of Haarlem from the waters of the Y, so called from its shape, which is a prolongation of the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee that penetrates into the land between Amsterdam and North Holland as far as the dunes of the North Sea. To construct this railway, which was opened in 1839, before the draining of the Lake of Haarlem, it was necessary to sink fagot upon fagot, pile upon pile, to heap up stone and sand, and form an artificial isthmus across the marshes—in a word, to make the ground over which the railway was to pass. It was a difficult and costly work, which even now requires continual care and expenditure. This tongue of land narrows as it nears Halfweg, the only station between Haarlem and Amsterdam. Here the waters of the Y and the bottom of the drained lake are divided by colossal locks, upon which depends the existence of a large part of Southern Holland. If these locks were to open, the city of Amsterdam, hundreds of villages, all the old lake, and fifty kilometres of country would be overflowed and destroyed by the waters. The draining of the Lake of Haarlem has diminished this danger, but has not removed

it; hence a special division of the so-called Administration of the Waters is established at Halfweg, to guard this Thermopylæ of Holland, with its eye upon the enemy and its hand on the sword.

After passing Halfweg station, one sees to the left, beyond the bay of the Y, a confused movement which seems like the masts of innumerable ships beaten about in a storm, that seem to be rising and falling on the sea. They are in reality the arms of hundreds of windmills partly hidden by the dykes, which extend along the banks of Northern Holland in the suburbs of Zaandam and opposite Amsterdam. Shortly afterward Amsterdam comes into view. At the first sight of this city, even if one has seen all the other Dutch towns, one cannot restrain a gesture of surprise. One beholds a forest of very high windmills shaped like large towers, steeples, lighthouses, pyramids, broken cones, aërial houses, which swing their enormous cruciform arms and revolve in confusion above the roofs and cupolas like a cloud of enormous birds beating their wings over the town. In the midst of these windmills are seen innumerable workshops, towers, masts, steeples of fantastic architecture, roofs of quaint buildings, pinnacles, peaks, and unknown forms, and in the distance the arms of more windmills, packed closely together, and seeming like a vast network suspended in mid-air. The whole town is black, the sky lowering and restless—a grand, confused spectacle, which makes

one's entry into Amsterdam a moment of keen curiosity.

It is difficult to describe the first impression which this city makes upon one who has passed through some of its streets. It seems to be an immense, untidy city—a Venice grown large and ugly; a Dutch city; yes, but seen through a magnifying-glass that makes its seem three times its natural size; the capital of an imaginary Holland of fifty millions of inhabitants, an ancient metropolis built by a race of giants on the delta of a boundless river to serve as port to a fleet of ten thousand vessels—a city majestic, severe, and almost gloomy, which makes one feel stupid and reflective.

The city, situated on the bank of the Y, is built on ninety islands, almost all rectangular, joined together by about three hundred and fifty bridges. It forms a perfect semicircle, and is divided by many canals in concentric arcs, and crossed by other canals, which converge to a common centre like the threads of a spider's web. A large watercourse called the Amstel (which together with the word *dam*, meaning dyke, gives Amsterdam its name) cuts the town into two almost equal parts and empties into the Y. Nearly all the houses are built on piles, and it is said that if Amsterdam were overturned, it would present the appearance of a great forest without leaves and branches. Nearly all the canals are flanked by two wide streets and two rows of linden trees.

The Inner Harbor, Amsterdam.



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This regularity of form, which allows the eye to see every part gives the city an appearance of wonderful grandeur. At every street-corner one sees in a new direction three, four, or even six drawbridges, some open, some lowered, others swinging around, which appear to the eye like a succession of doors—an inextricable confusion of beams and chains, giving the impression that Amsterdam is composed of hostile factions fortified against each other. Canals as wide as rivers form coves and large docks here and there, round which one may walk by passing over a chain of bridges joined one to another. From all the crossways there are distant views of other bridges, canals, ships, and buildings, veiled by a slight mist which makes the distance appear greater.

The houses are very high in comparison with those of other Dutch towns. They are black, with the windows and doors bordered with white. The gables are pointed or cut in steps, and are decorated with bas-reliefs representing urns, flowers, and animals. They are almost all protected in front by small pillars, balustrades, railings, chains, and iron bars, and divided from each other by little walls and wooden partitions. Inside of these diminutive outer fortresses, which occupy a large part of the streets, are tables, flower-stands, chairs, buckets, wheelbarrows, baskets, skeletons of old furniture. Hence when one looks down the streets it seems as though the inhabitants had put all their furniture outside of

their houses and were ready for a universal removal. Many houses have basements, to which access is gained by wooden or stone staircases, and in this gap between the street and the wall are more flower-pots and furniture, merchandise exhibited for sale, people at work—a confused, curious life which buzzes at the feet of the passers-by.

The principal streets present an unique spectacle. The canals are covered with ships and barges, and along them on one side are seen mountains of casks, packing-boxes, sacks, and bales, and on the other side a row of splendid shops. Here are groups of well-dressed men, ladies, maids, peddlers, and shop-keepers, while opposite is the coarse roving crowd of sailors, and boatmen with their wives and children. To the right is heard the lively talk of the towns-people; to the left, the shrill, slow cries of the seafaring folk. On the one side one smells the sweet scent of flowers from the window-gardens and the odor of delicate restaurants; on the other the reek of tar and the fumes of poor cookery arising from the sailing boats. Here a drawbridge is raised to allow a vessel to pass; there the people crowd upon a bridge which is swinging into place; farther on a raft is carrying a group of passengers to the other bank of the canal; at one end of the street a steamer is taking its departure, while from the opposite end a row of loaded barges is entering. Here a lock is opened, there a *trekschuit* glides down the canal; not far away a

windmill is turning, and farther down the piles for a new house are being driven in. The creaking of the bridge chains is mingled with the rumble of carts; the whistles of steamers break into the chimes of the bells; the rigging of the ships gets entangled in the branches of trees; a carriage passes close to a boat; the shops are reflected in the canals, the sails are reflected in the windows; the life of the land and the life of the sea go on side by side, cross and recross, and mingle together in a new, merry scene like a festival of peace and reunion.

On leaving the principal streets for the old parts of the city the spectacle changes entirely. The narrowest streets of Toledo, the darkest alleys of Genoa, the crookedest houses in Rotterdam, are nothing in comparison to the narrowness, darkness, and architectural confusion of this part of Amsterdam. The streets look like cracks opened by an earthquake. The high dingy houses, half hidden by the rags hung on cords from window to window, are so crooked that they alarm the pedestrian. Some are bent almost double, and seem on the point of breaking to pieces; the roofs of others almost touch, leaving only a streak of light visible between them; others bend in opposite directions, resembling an overturned trapeze, and seem like houses on the stage at the moment they are carried away to change the scene. Were they built thus purposely to drain off the water, or have they become crooked because

the ground has sunk beneath them? Some hold the former, others the latter theory, but the greater number believe both, which seems to me the most reasonable thing to do. Even in this labyrinth, where swarms a pale and squalid population to whom a ray of sunlight is a benediction from God, one sees flower-pots and looking-glasses and little curtains at the windows, which indicate that in spite of poverty the people love their homes.

The most picturesque part of the city is that enclosed by the curve of the Amstel round the great square of the new market. There are dark streets and deserted canals intersecting each other; lonely squares surrounded by walls dripping with damp; sooty, mildewed, cracked, mouldering houses saturated with stagnant, dirty water; large warehouses with all their doors and windows shut; boats and barges abandoned at the end of blind water-alleys, looking as though they were awaiting some conspirator or witch; heaps of building material which seem to be the remains of fires or ruins; muddy lanes and pools covered with weeds. Walls, water, bridges, —all are black and gloomy; and as one passes for the first time, one feels an unrest as though some misfortune were threatening.

Those who love contrast need only go from this part of the city to the square called *The Dam*, where the principal streets converge. Here are the Royal Palace, the Exchange, the New Church, and the

monument of the Metal Cross, erected in commemoration of the war of 1830. Here too is an immense continual movement of dense crowds of people and carriages, calling to mind Trafalgar Square in London, the Porta del Sol in Madrid, and the Place de la Madeleine in Paris. Standing an hour in this centre, one may enjoy the most varied scene to be found in Holland. One sees the florid, petulant faces of the patrician merchants, visages bronzed by the sun of the colonies, strangers of every shade of complexion, cicerones, organ-grinders, messengers of death with their long black veils, servants in white caps, the many-colored waistcoats of the fishermen from the Zuyder Zee, women from the North of Holland with earrings like the winkers on horses' bridles, the silver diadems of Friesland, gilded helmets from Groningen, the yellow shirts of the peat-diggers, orphans from the asylum with their parti-colored red and black petticoats, the loud dresses of the inhabitants of the islands, enormous chignons, hats worthy of the Carnival, wide shoulders, large hips, and fat stomachs,—the whole procession enveloped in the smoke of cigars and pipes, while the sound of German, Dutch, English, French, Flemish, and Danish words reaches the ear, until one thinks one has fallen into the valley of Jehoshaphat or at the foot of the Tower of Babel.

From the Square of the Dam the port is reached in a few minutes, and this also presents an appear-

ance strange beyond description. At first sight it is incomprehensible. On every side are dykes, bridges, locks, piles, and docks that look like a huge fortress so cunningly built that no one can succeed in understanding its plan; and, in fact, without the aid of a map and a walk of several hours it is impossible to find one's way. From the centre of the city, at the distance of a thousand metres from each other, two great arched dykes branch out in different directions, and enclose and defend the two extremities of Amsterdam from the sea, and the two extremities project beyond the semicircle of houses like the two points of a half moon. These two dykes each have a large opening provided with a gigantic lock, enclosing two harbors, capable of holding a thousand large ships, and several small islands on which are warehouses, arsenals, and manufactories where numbers of workmen find employment. Between the two large dykes several smaller ones project. These are formed of strong palisades, and serve as an embarking station for steamers. On all these dykes there are houses, sheds, and storehouses, around which swarms a crowd of sailors, passengers, porters, women, boys, carriages, and carts, attracted thither by the arrivals and departures, which succeed each other from daybreak until evening. From the end of these dykes the view embraces the whole port —the two forests of ships, bearing flags of a thousand colors, enclosed in the two great harbors; the vessels

that arrive from the great Northern Canal and that enter the Zuyder Zee in full sail; the barges and boats that cross each other in all parts of the gulf; the green coast of North Holland, the hundred windmills of Zaandam, the long row of the first Amsterdam houses that cut the sky with thousands of black pinnacles, the innumerable columns of sooty smoke which rise from the city above the gray horizon; and when the clouds are in motion a continual, rapid, marvellous change of color and variety of light-effects, so that at one moment the country seems to be the gayest in the world, and the next the most sombre.

On returning to the city and carefully observing the buildings, the first thing that attracts the attention is the frequency of steeples. In Amsterdam there are places of worship for every religion—synagogues, churches of Reformed Calvinists, churches of the Lutherans who adhere strictly to the Augsburg Confession, churches of the Lutherans who interpret the Augsburg Confession more liberally, churches of the Expostulators, the Mennonites, the Walloons, the English Episcopalians, English Presbyterians, Catholics, Greek schismatics; and every one of these churches raises to heaven a spire that seems determined to surpass all the others in originality and oddity. What Victor Hugo says of the Flemish architects, who build steeples by putting an overturned salad bowl on a judge's cap, a sugar-basin

on a salt-cellar, a bottle on the sugar-basin and a chalice on the bottle, may in great part be applied to the steeples of Amsterdam. Some are formed of kiosks and little churches put one on the top of another; others of a number of little towers that seem to have been pulled out of each other in such a way that if a blow were to be given to the highest, the whole steeple would fold up like a spy-glass; others are as slender as minarets, and are built almost entirely of iron, which is ornamented, gilded, perforated, and transparent; others are decorated from the middle upward with terraces, balustrades, arches, and columns; nearly all are surmounted by globes or crowns of iron in the shape of a bulb, on which are placed other crowns that hold balls and flag-staffs, to which some other objects are fastened, and perhaps these are not even the last,—the whole exactly resembling the little towers children make by putting all the trifles they can get one on the top of another.

Among the few monumental edifices is the Royal Palace, the first of the Dutch palaces, built between 1648 and 1655, on thirteen thousand six hundred and fifty-nine piles. It is grand, massive, and gloomy. Its greatest ornament is a ball-room said to be the largest in Europe, and its greatest defect is that it has no great entrance-door, for which reason it is generally called the house without a door. On the other hand, the Exchange, which is opposite,

with a foundation of thirty-four thousand piles, has nothing noteworthy excepting a peristyle of seventeen columns, and hence is called the door without a house—a joke that every Dutchman makes a point of repeating to strangers, with an imperceptible smile hovering at the corners of his mouth. Those who arrive in Amsterdam during the first week of the *Kermesse*, which is the Dutch Carnival, can see a curious spectacle in this building. For seven days, during the dull hours of business, the Exchange is open to all the boys of the town, who rush in, making an infernal noise with fifes, drums, and shouts —a liberty which, according to the tradition, was granted by the municipality in honor of some boys who in the time of the War of Independence were playing near the old Exchange, and, discovering that the Spanish were preparing to blow up the building with a ship full of gunpowder, ran to tell the townspeople, thus frustrating the designs of the enemy. Besides the Royal Palace and the Exchange, the Palace of Industry is a fine ornament to Amsterdam. It is built of glass and iron, surmounted by a very light cupola, which, from a distance when the sun strikes it, has the appearance of a large mosque. As historical monuments the old towers on the bank of the port also deserve notice.

Among these towers is one called "The Tower of the Corner of Weepers" or "The Tower of Tears," because in former times Dutch sailors embarked from

it on long voyages, and their families came there to bid them farewell and sobbed as they departed. Above the door is a rough bas-relief bearing the date 1569. It represents the port, a ship leaving the shore, and a woman weeping. It was placed there in memory of a sailor's wife who died of grief at parting from her husband.

Almost all the strangers who visit the tower, after looking at the bas-relief and at the guide-book which tells the tale, turn to the sea to search for the departing vessel, and remain in thought for a time. What are they thinking? Perhaps the same thoughts that passed through my mind. They follow that ship into the Arctic Ocean, to the whale-fisheries, or in search of a new passage to India, and the tremendous epic of the Dutch sailor in the midst of the horrors of the Polar regions flashes across their mind like a vision. They think of seas blocked with ice, cold that causes the skin to fall in shreds from hands and face, polar bears which rush upon the sailors and break the weapons with their teeth, walruses in furious droves which overturn the boats, the blocks of ice whirled around by waves and wind, and the vast treacherous plains of floating ice which imprisons and crushes the ships; the deserted islands covered with the bodies of the sailors, with the wrecks of vessels, with leathern bands gnawed by famished mariners in the throes of death. Then the whales that crowd round the ship, the fearful

The Tower of Tears, Amsterdam.



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contortions of the wounded monsters in the blood-stained water, the boats overturned at a single blow, the shipwrecked sailors wandering half-naked in the fog and darkness, the huts cut in the ice, and the sleep which ends in death. Then, again, infinite solitudes white and shrouded in mist, where no sound is heard save the splash of oars, echoed by the caverns and the weird cry of the seals; then other deserts without a sign of life—measureless mountains of ice, boundless tracts of unknown country, eternal snow, eternal winter, the awful solemnity of the polar night, the infinite silence which terrifies the soul, the famished, emaciated, delirious seamen, who kneel on the deck and raise their clasped hands to the horizon flaring with the aurora borealis, praying God that they may once more see the sun and their fatherland. Scientists, merchants, poets, all bow before that humble vanguard who with their skeletons have marked out the first pathway on the immaculate snow of the North Pole.

Turning to the right from this tower and continuing to walk around the harbor, one arrives at the Plantaadije, a vast quarter formed of two islands connected by many bridges, in which is a park, a zoological garden, and a botanical garden, forming a wide, green, merry oasis in the midst of the livid waters and gloomy houses. This is the place for concerts and evening festivals; here comes the flower of Amsterdam's beauty—a flower which, fortunately

for susceptible travellers, sheds a mild perfume which does not intoxicate. From this peril, however, there is no safer refuge than the Zoological Garden, which is the property of a company of fifteen thousand members. It is the most beautiful zoological garden in Holland, where there are many fine gardens, and is one of the richest in Europe. The enormous salamanders from Japan, the boa-constrictors from Java, and the *Bradypi didactyli* from Surinam quickly dispel the images of the pale faces and blue eyes of the beautiful Calvinists.

Leaving the Plantaadije, by crossing several bridges and passing along several canals one arrives at the great square of the Boter Markt, where stands a gigantic statue of Rembrandt near the Italian consulate. This square leads to the Jewish quarter, which is one of the marvels of Amsterdam.

I asked the courteous consul the way to this part of the city, and he answered:

"Walk straight along until you find a portion of the town infinitely dirtier than any you have hitherto considered the *ne plus ultra* of filth: that is the ghetto; you cannot mistake it."

It may be imagined with what expectations I walked on. I passed a synagogue, and stopped a moment at a crossing, then I turned down the narrowest street, and in a moment recognized the ghetto. My expectations were more than realized.

It was a labyrinth of narrow streets, foul and

dark, with very old houses on either side, which seemed as though they would crumble to pieces if one kicked the walls. From cords strung from window to window, from the window-sills, from nails driven into the doors, dangled and fluttered tattered skirts, patched petticoats, greasy clothes, dirty sheets, and ragged trousers, flapping against the damp walls. In front of the doors, on the broken steps, in the midst of tottering railings, old goods were exposed for sale. Broken furniture, fragments of weapons, objects of devotion, shreds of uniforms, parts of machinery, splinters of toys, iron tools, broken china, fringes, rags, things that have no name in any language; everything that has been ruined or destroyed by rust, worms, fire, disorder, dissipation, disease, poverty, death; all those things that servants sweep away, rag-merchants throw away, beggars trample under foot, and animals neglect; all that encumbers, smells, disgusts, contaminates,—all this is to be found there in heaps and layers destined for a mysterious commerce, for unforeseen combinations, and for incredible transformations. In the midst of this cemetery of things, this Babylon of uncleanness, swarms a sickly, wretched, filthy race, beside which the gypsies of Albaycin in Granada are clean and sweet. As in other lands, so here too they have borrowed from the people among whom they live the coloring of their skin and hair, but they have preserved the hooked nose, the pointed chin, the curly hair, and

all the features of the Semitic race. No words can give an adequate idea of these people. Hair through which no comb has ever passed, eyes which make one shudder, figures thin and ghastly as corpses, ugliness that is revolting, old men and women who seem hardly human, wrapped as they are in all manner of clothes without color or form, so that it is impossible to know to what sex they belong, stretching out trembling, skeleton hands which look like locusts and spiders. Everything is done in the middle of the street. The women fry fish on small stoves, the girls lull the babies to sleep, the men fumble among their old rags, the half-naked children roll on the pavement, which is littered with decaying vegetables and dirty remains of fish; decrepit old women, seated on the ground, scratch their itching, filthy bodies with their fierce nails, revealing with the disregard of animals worn-out rags and limbs from which the eye turns with loathing. I picked my way for a long distance on tiptoe, covering my nose now and then, and taking care to turn my eyes from those things which I could not bear to see, and when at last I reached the banks of a wide canal in an open, clean place, it seemed to me that I had come upon a terrestrial paradise, and it was delightful to breathe the air impregnated with tar.

In Amsterdam, as in all the other Dutch cities, there are many private societies, some of which have

all the importance of large national institutions. The principal one is the Society of Public Utility, founded in 1784, which is almost a second government for Holland. Its object is to educate the people, and to this end it provides elementary books, public lectures, mechanics' libraries, primary schools, training-schools, singing-schools, asylums, savings banks, prizes for good conduct, rewards for acts of valor and self-denial. The society, which is ruled by an administrative council composed of ten directors and a secretary, comprises more than fifteen thousand members, divided into three hundred groups, which in their turn form the same number of independent societies that are scattered through all the towns, villages, and small communities of the state. Every member pays a little more than ten francs a year. With the sum that this tax produces, small indeed in comparison to the great extent of the institution, the society exercises, as the Dutch say, a sort of anonymous magistracy over social customs, unites all religious sects by the tie of impartial beneficence, and with open hand spreads instruction, help, and comfort over the whole country. As the society arose independently, so it works and proceeds, faithful to the Dutch principle that the tree of charity must grow without grafting or supports. Other societies, such as the *Arti et Amicitiæ*, the *Felix Meritis*, the *Doctrina et Amicitia*, have as their object the promotion of art and science; they encourage public exhibitions, com-

petitions, and lectures, and are at the same time splendid places of meeting, being provided with excellent libraries and with all the great journals of Europe.

A book might be written on the charitable institutions in Amsterdam alone. The remark of Louis XIV. to Charles II. of England when he was preparing to invade Holland is well known: "Do not fear for Amsterdam; I am perfectly sure that Providence will save it, if only in consideration of its charity toward the poor." There every human misfortune finds an asylum and a remedy. Especially admirable is the orphan asylum of the citizens of Amsterdam, which had the honor of sheltering the immortal Van Speyk, who in 1831, on the waters of the Scheldt, saved the honor of the Dutch flag at the cost of his life. These orphans wear a very curious dress, partly red and partly black, so that on one side they seem dressed for a carnival, and on the other for a funeral. This strange style of dress was chosen in order that the orphans should be recognized by the tavern-keepers, who are forbidden to allow them to enter, and by the railway employés, who must not allow them to travel without permission of the directors; these ends, however, might surely have been attained without such a ridiculous uniform. These bicolored orphans are seen everywhere; bright, clean, and polite, they cheer one's heart. At all public fêtes they occupy the front place; in all solemn ceremonies their song is heard;

the first stone laid for national monuments is placed by their hands; and the people love and honor them.

To make an end of speaking of institutions, the special industries of Amsterdam, such as the refining of borax and camphor and the manufacture of enamel, ought not to be omitted, but it will be best to leave these things to the travellers of the future who wish to write encyclopædias. The art of polishing diamonds however, deserves notice. This is the principal industry of the city, and was for a long time a secret known in Europe only to the Jews of Antwerp and Amsterdam. The trade is still confined almost entirely to the circumcised. This industry year by year reaches the sum of a hundred million francs, and provides more than ten thousand persons with a livelihood. One of the finest workshops is on the Zwanenburgerstraat, in which the workmen themselves explain to visitors in French how the diamonds are cut and subjected to a first and second polishing. The work is done under the eyes of the visitors in the pleasantest manner and with admirable skill. It is beautiful to see those humble pebbles, looking like fragments of dirty gum arabic, which if one found them at home would be thrown out of the window with cigar-ends, in a few minutes transformed, burning and animated with a glancing, brilliant life, as though they understood the destiny that has dragged them from the entrails of the earth to serve the pomps of the world. Of how many

strange scenes will that little stone which the workman holds between the fingers of his iron glove be the witness or the cause! Perhaps it will gleam on the forehead of a queen, who some night will leave it in her casket while she escapes from the crowd who have broken down the palace doors. If it falls into the hands of a Communist, it may glitter some day on the table at a law-court next to a dagger stained with blood. It may pass through the revelry of nuptial feasts, of banquets and dances, and then be spirited through the door of a pawn-shop or through the window of a carriage attacked by thieves, and may pass from hand to hand, from country to country, to glitter on the finger of a princess in a box at the opera at St. Petersburg. Thence it may go to add another sparkle to the sword of a pasha in Asia Minor, and then to tempt the virtue of some milliner of sixteen in the Quartier St. Antoine in Paris, and finally—who knows?—it may ornament the watch of some great-grand-niece of the one who first introduced it to the honors of the world, for among these workmen some save enough to leave a small fortune to their descendants. Some years ago one might have seen at the workshop on Zwanenburgerstraat the old Jew who cut the famous Kohinoor, which, besides winning the medal of honor at the Paris Exhibition, brought to him a gift of ten thousand florins and a royal gift from the Queen of England.

At Amsterdam there is the finest picture-gallery in Holland.

A stranger who goes there prepared to admire the two greatest masterpieces of Dutch painting need not ask where they are. As soon as he passes the threshold he sees a little room filled with silent, rapt spectators. He enters and finds himself in the inmost sacred recess of the temple. To the right is the "Night Watch" by Rembrandt, to the left the "Banquet of the National Guards" by Van der Helst.

After seeing these two pictures again and again, I often amused myself by observing those who came into that room for the first time. Nearly all, as soon as they entered, stopped, looked round them with a stupefied air, and then turned to the right. It is Rembrandt who conquers.

The "Night Watch"—or, as others call it, the "Turning Out of the Arquebusiers" or "Banning Cocq's Company"—the largest canvas painted by Rembrandt, is more than a picture; it is a pageant, an amazing spectacle. All French critics have used the same phrase to express the effect it produces—"*c'est écrasant.*" It is a great mass of moving human figures, a bright light and profound darkness. At the first glance one sees only this, and for some moments one does not know where to turn one's eyes to comprehend the grand and splendid confusion. There are officers, halberdiers, boys running, arque-

busiers loading and firing, young men beating drums, people bending, shouting, screaming, gesticulating,— all dressed in different costumes, with round and pointed hats, plumes, helmets, casques, iron gorgets, linen ruffs, waistcoats embroidered in gold, high boots, stockings of every hue, arms of every shape; a disordered, tumultuous, glittering crowd that stands out from the dark background of the picture and seems to advance toward the spectator. The two foremost figures are Frans Banning Cocq, Lord of Purmerend and Ilpendam, captain of the company, and his lieutenant, Willem van Ruitenberg, Lord of Vlaardingen, walking side by side. The only two figures in full light are this lieutenant, dressed in a jacket of buffalo skin with gold ornaments, a scarf, ruff, white plume, and high boots, and a little girl who comes behind him dressed in a yellow satin dress with her fair hair adorned with pearls. All the other personages are in darkness or shadow, excepting their heads, which are all illuminated. By what light? This is the enigma. Is it the light of the sun or the moon, or is it from the torches? Flashes of gold and silver, lunar reflections, fiery lights, people who, like the fair-haired girl, seem to shine by their own light; faces illuminated by the flames of a fire, dazzling scintillations, shadows, gloom, and subterranean darkness, all are to be found in this picture harmonized and contrasted with miraculous boldness and unsurpassed art. Are there any discords of

light? Is there needless obscurity? Details irrelevant to the scene? Vague grotesque forms? Unjustified eccentricities and omissions? All this has been said against the picture. It has been criticised with blind enthusiasm and ruthless censure, lauded to the skies as one of the wonders of the world, deemed unworthy of Rembrandt, discussed, explained in a thousand ways. But, notwithstanding all censure, defects, and conflicting interpretations, it has hung there for two centuries triumphant and glorious, and the more one looks at it the more it glows and lives, and, even if seen hastily, it remains for ever impressed on the memory with all its splendor and mystery, like a wonderful vision.

The picture by Van der Helst (a painter of whom nothing is known excepting that he was born at Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and passed the greater part of his life there) represents a banquet given by the Civic Guard of Amsterdam to celebrate the Peace of Münster on the 18th of June, 1648. The picture contains twenty-five life-sized figures, all faithful portraits of notable personages, whose names are preserved. Officers, sergeants, flag-bearers, and guards are grouped round a table, shaking hands, drinking toasts, and talking: some are carving, some eating, some peeling oranges, some pouring out wine. Rembrandt's picture is a fantastic apparition; Van der Helst's is a mirror which reflects a real scene.

There is neither union nor contrast nor mystery; everything is represented with equal care and precision. Heads and hands, figures in the foreground and background, steel cuirasses and lace fringes, plumed hats and silken banners, silver cornucopias and gilded goblets, vases, knives, crockery, victuals, wines, arms, ornaments,—everything stands out, shines, deceives, delights. The heads, considered singly, are wonderfully clever portraits, from which a doctor could understand the temperament and prescribe with certainty. It has been justly said of the hands that if they were detached from the bodies and all mixed together, they could be recognized and returned to each figure without fear of mistake, so distinct, finished, and individual are they. Face by face, costume by costume, object by object, the more one examines them the more one discovers, in the way of particulars, details, touches, and trifles reproduced with amazing exactness and fidelity. More than this, the variety and splendor of coloring, the cheerfulness and freshness of the faces, the pompous dress, the thousand glittering objects, all give to the large picture an air of merry-making and festivity, which helps one to forget the vulgarity of the subject, and communicates itself to the spectator, awakening a feeling of friendly sympathy and admiration which makes even the most serious face break into a smile.

There is also in the gallery Rembrandt's large picture of "The Syndics of the Cloth Merchants,"

The Old Clothes Market, Amsterdam.



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painted nineteen years after the "Night Watch," with less youthful impetuosity and less imaginative eccentricity, but with all the vigor of mature genius. It is no less wonderful than the other in the effects of chiaroscuro, the expression of the figures, strength of coloring, and exuberance of life. Some even prefer it to the "Night Watch." There is another picture by Van der Helst, "The Syndics of the Confraternity of St. Sebastian at Amsterdam," in which all the marvellous power of the great master is revealed, though in a somewhat less degree than in "The Banquet."

Steen has eight pictures, among which is his own portrait, representing him as young and handsome, with long hair and a quiet meditative air, which seems to say, "No, strangers, I was not a dissipated man, a drunkard, a bad husband; I have been calumniated; respect my memory." The subjects of his pictures are a servant cleaning a saucepan, a peasant family returning home in a boat, a baker making bread, a family scene, a village wedding, a feast of children, a charlatan in a square, with the usual drunkards, the usual convulsive grins, the usual grotesque figures, marvellously colored and illumined. In the picture of "The Charlatan," especially, his mania for the grotesque reaches the highest point. The heads are deformed, the faces are mere bags, the noses are hooks, the backs humps, the hands paws, the attitudes contortions, the smiles are grimaces; in short, they are people whose orig-

inals are to be found only in the glass cases of anatomical museums or amongst the animal caricatures of Grandville. It is impossible to help laughing, but one laughs as the spectators of Gymplaine must have laughed, saying in their hearts, "What a pity he is a monster!"

Yet there was an artist who lowered this style of art even more than Steen—Adriaen Brouwer, one of the most famous scapegraces of Holland. He was the pupil of Franz Hals, and used to get drunk with him once a day, until, driven by his creditors, he fled from Amsterdam to Antwerp, where he was arrested as a spy and thrown into prison. Rubens procured his release and took him into his own house, but Rubens led a steady life, and Brouwer wished to lead a dissipated one. Consequently he left Antwerp and went to Paris, where he continued his riotous existence until reduced to a skeleton. He then returned to Antwerp, and ended his miserable life in a hospital, aged thirty-two. As he frequented only taverns and lived with the rabble, he painted only disgusting, coarse scenes with low women and drunken ruffians, whose merit is their lively, harmonious coloring and their originality. The gallery at Amsterdam contains two of his pictures, one representing "Peasants Fighting," the other a "Village Revel." The last is a characteristic Brouwer. It represents a room in a tavern in which drunken men and women are drinking and smoking. One woman

lies extended on the ground dead drunk, her child crying by her side.

Here too, in Amsterdam, is the famous picture by Gerard Dou called "The Night School" or the "Picture of the Four Candles," one of the choicest gems of Dutch painting, worthy to be placed next to his "Dropsical Woman" in the Louvre. It is a small picture which represents a schoolmaster with two pupils and a girl seated near a table; another girl is directing a little scholar writing on a slate, while others are studying at the end of the room. The originality of this picture consists in the fact that the figures are only accessories, the principals, the protagonists, in a word the subjects of the picture, are four candles—one burning in a lantern abandoned on the pavement, another lighting the group of master and pupils, the third held by the girl and casting its light upon the slate, the fourth on a table in the background among the boys who are reading. It is easy to imagine what a play of rays, shadows, reflections, what tremulous, glimmering varieties of light, an artist like Dou was able to see in those four little flames—what infinite difficulties he created for himself, what care it required to overcome them, and with what marvellous skill they were overcome. This picture, painted, as a critic said, with the eyelash of "a new-born baby," and covered with glass like a relic, was sold in 1766 for eight thousand francs, and in 1808 for thirty-five

thousand; and certainly this sum with a cipher added to it would not be enough to buy it to-day.

If I were to describe only the principal paintings that adorn these walls, I should never end. The melancholy, sublime Ruysdael has a winter scene and a forest "full of his own soul," as critics say of his landscapes. Ter Borch has his celebrated "Paternal Counsel;" Wouverman, ten admirable paintings of hunting scenes, battles, and horses; Potter, Karel du Jardin, Van Ostade, Cuyp, Metsu, Van der Werde, Everdingen, are represented by several of the best works from their brushes, which it would be useless to attempt to describe with the pen. Nor is this the only picture-gallery in Amsterdam. Another, left to the town by a certain Van der Hoop, a former member of Parliament, contains almost two hundred pictures by the greatest Dutch and Flemish painters, and besides this there are several rich private galleries.

But the gallery which contains the "Night Watch" and the "Banquet of the Civic Guard" as it is the first visited, so also is it the last which strangers revisit to bid farewell to Dutch painting before leaving Amsterdam for North Holland and Friesland, where there are no galleries. At this moment I close my eyes and seem to be in the room of the "Watch" and the "Banquet" on the day when I went there for the first time. The thought that I should soon leave, and perhaps never again see these

marvels of human genius, saddened me. Dutch painting did not arouse in me any profound emotion; no picture made me weep, no image raised me to the heights, no artist inspired me with a feeling of lively, grateful, enthusiastic affection. Yet I feel I have brought away a treasure from these Dutch galleries. An entire nation, country, and century has been engraven on my mind. Furthermore, be it illusion or reality, all those pictures of quiet housekeepers, of happy old men, of chubby children, of healthy, fresh girls, of quiet, tidy rooms, and well-spread tables, when I recall them before my eyes make me happier in the four walls of my own little room; I curl myself up in my corner with greater pleasure, and am more content than ever to live a family life, to have sisters and nieces. I bless my hearth more affectionately, and seat myself in serene contentment at the frugal table of my home. Is it not better, perhaps, after one has seen angels, divine women, superhuman loves, great calamities and glorious triumphs, after being horrified, after weeping, adoring, and dreaming, after letting our thoughts and affections soar among the clouds,—is it not well, I say, to descend a little to earth and persuade ourselves that there all is not to be despised, that we must know when and where to cast troubles out of window, that this world is not so bad as it is said to be, that it is better to live the life that God has given to us, that we be neither visionary, turbu-

lent, proud, improvident, nor mad? Dutch painting has persuaded my mind of this, therefore blessed be Dutch painting. Anatomical students, national guards, arquebusiers, mayors, servants, fishermen, drunkards, bulls, sheep, tulips, windmills, livid seas and misty horizons, may you dwell long before my eyes, and when in my mind you become only confused memories may I still hold to the virtues of industry and of living with justice and economy, like a good Dutchman, so that with God's permission I shall be able to return to see you again.

Napoleon the Great was bored in Amsterdam, but I firmly believe it was his own fault. I amused myself. All those canals, bridges, harbors, and islands form such a variety of picturesque views that, however much one may roam, one never sees them all. There are innumerable ways of passing the time pleasantly. One may go to see the milk-boats arrive from Utrecht; one may follow the barges that are carrying furniture from one house to another, with the white capped maid-servants standing on the deck; one may pass half an hour on the tower of the Royal Palace, where the eye embraces the Gulf of the Y, the ancient Lake of Haarlem, the towers of Utrecht, the red roofs of Zaandam, and that fantastic forest of masts, steeples, and windmills; one may look on at the dredging of the mud from the canals,—at the repairing of bridges and locks,—at the thousand attentions

required by this singular town, which is obliged to spend four hundred thousand florins a year to rule its waters; and when there is nothing else worth seeing there remains the spectacle of the servants for ever washing the streets, the house doors, the first-floor windows, and the clothes of passers-by with pumps and squirts. Afterward, in the evening, there is the Kalverstraat, lined on either side with a row of splendid shops and coffee-houses, half of which are illuminated, half shrouded in darkness, past which up to a late hour swarms a slow, dense crowd of people, full of beer and money, mixed with certain facsimiles of *cocottes* in groups of threes and fours, who walk about stiffly, very much dressed up, neither looking at any one, nor laughing, nor speaking, as though they were meditating some aggression. A few steps brings one from the lighted, crowded streets to the borders of the dark canals, among the motionless ships, in the midst of a profound silence. Passing over a bridge, one arrives in the district where live the lowest classes. Here one may see lights glimmering from subterranean shops and hear the music of the sailors' balls. Thus every moment there is a change of scene and thought, with all due deference to Napoleon I.

Such is this famous city, whose history is no less strange than its form and appearance. A poor fishing village, whose name was unknown at the end of the eleventh century, became in the seventeenth

the grain emporium of the whole of Northern Europe, depopulated the flourishing ports of the Zuyder Zee, and gathered into its hands the commerce of Venice, Seville, Lisbon, Antwerp, and Bruges, attracted merchants from all countries, sheltered refugees of every faith, revived after frightful inundations, defended itself from the Anabaptists, frustrated the plots of Leicester, dictated laws to William II., repulsed the invasion of Louis XIV., and at last, like everything in this world, declined, but shone once more with an ephemeral light as the third city of the French Empire—an official honor which was much like the decorations given to discontented *employés* to compensate them for ruinous removals. It is still a rich, commercial town, but is cautious, slow, and conservative of its traditions; it prefers speculating on the Stock Exchange to undertaking bold enterprises, and competes with its more youthful and hopeful rivals, Hamburg and Rotterdam, by grumbling rather than by working. Notwithstanding, Amsterdam still preserves the majesty of her ancient dignity as conqueror of the seas, she is still the loveliest gem of the United Provinces, and the stranger who departs from her departs with an impression of severity, grandeur, and power which no other capital in Europe is capable of effacing.

UTRECHT.

UTRECHT.

FROM Amsterdam it is usual to make an excursion to the famous town of Utrecht, whose name we have so often pronounced as children, trying to stamp the date 1713 on our brains when preparing for history examinations. One goes to Utrecht—which in itself offers nothing extraordinary to those who have seen other Dutch cities—not so much from curiosity as to be able in future to refer to the places one has seen when recalling the famous events that occurred within its walls. One goes to breathe the air of the town, where the most solemn act in Dutch history was completed, the alliance of the Netherland Provinces against Philip II., where the treaty was signed which restored peace to Europe after the dreadful wars of the Spanish Succession, where the innocent head of the octogenarian Van Diemen fell under the axe of the Duke of Alva, where the memories of St. Boniface, Adrian VI., Charles V., and Louis XIV. are still alive and eloquent, and the warlike fury of the ancient bishops still burns in the blood of the orthodox Calvinists and ultramontane Catholics.

On leaving Amsterdam the road passes near the

Diemermeer, the deepest polder (the name given by the Dutch to the drained land) in Holland; then runs along a branch of the Rhine called the Vecht, and, passing by villas and kitchen-gardens, reaches the town of Utrecht, situated in the midst of a most fertile country, watered by the Rhine, threaded by canals, and dotted with gardens and cottages.

Utrecht, like Leyden, has the sad, solemn appearance of a city fallen into decay—vast deserted squares, broad silent streets, and wide canals in which houses of primitive form and gloomy color are reflected. But there is one novelty for the stranger. Like the Arno in Florence and the Seine at Paris, the canals are deeply sunk between the streets on either side, and below the street-level are workshops, and offices, stores, and humble abodes that have their doors on the water and the street for a roof. The town is encircled by wide avenues, and contains a famous promenade which Louis XV. generously preserved from the vandalism of his soldiers, a street half a French league in length, shaded by eight rows of beautiful linden trees.

The history of Utrecht is in great part identical with the history of its cathedral, which has perhaps undergone more transformations than all the other churches in Holland. It was founded about 720 by a bishop of Utrecht; was entirely rebuilt by another bishop toward the middle of the thirteenth century; on August 1, 1674, a hurricane carried away one

On the Old Canal, Utrecht.



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great nave, which was never rebuilt; the iconoclasts laid it waste in the sixteenth century; the French Catholics restored it the following century; and after the invasion of Louis XIV. the Dutch re-established the Protestant faith in its walls: in short, its statues, altars, and crosses have entered and quitted it, have been raised and cast down, venerated or despised, according to every change of the wind of doctrine. Formerly it was without doubt one of the largest and most beautiful churches in Holland; now it is bare and disfigured, and greatly encumbered by benches, which give it the appearance of a Chamber of Deputies. The hurricane of 1674, by destroying a nave, separated the church from its lofty tower, from which through the telescope can be seen almost all the provinces of Holland, part of Gelderland and Brabant, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Bois-le-Duc, Leck, and the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee, while a clock furnished with forty-two bells flings upon the air at the stroke of the hours the amorous song of Count Almaviva or the prayer of the Lombard crusaders.

Near the church is the celebrated university, founded in 1636, which still gives life to the town, although, like that of Leyden, it has lost its former importance. The University of Leyden has a distinct literary and scientific character; the University of Utrecht has a religious character, which it both communicates to and receives from the town, the seat of orthodox Protestantism. For this rea-

son it is said that in the streets of Utrecht one still sees the pale attenuated Puritan countenances that have disappeared elsewhere, which seem like the shadows cast by earlier times. The people have more serious faces than the citizens of other towns: the ladies affect an austere manner, and even among the students there is a certain air of a meditative penitent life, which, however, does not exclude beer, fêtes, uproars, and evil habits. Besides being the seat of orthodoxy, Utrecht is still one of the strongest citadels of Catholicism, which is professed by twenty-two thousand of the citizens, and no one can have forgotten the tempest that broke out in Holland when the pope wished to re-establish the former bishopric in that city—a tempest which reawakened the sleeping rancor between Protestants and Catholics and overthrew the ministry of the famous Torbecke, the little Cavour of the United Provinces.

But in the matter of religion Utrecht possesses a peculiar treasure, a curious archaeological relic worthy a museum—namely, the principal seat of the Jansenist sect, which is no longer an established Church except in the Low Countries, where it still counts thirty communities and some thousands of adherents. The church, which is decorated with the simple inscription Deo, rises in the midst of a group of houses disposed in the form of a cloister, joined by small courtyards and shaded by fruit trees, and in that silent sad retreat, to which many years ago there was but one

entrance, which was closed at night like the door of a fortress, languishes the decrepit doctrine of Jansen and his last followers. Even now the name of every newly-nominated bishop is duly announced to the pope, who invariably answers with a bull of excommunication, which is read from the pulpit, then buried and forgotten. So this little Port-Royal, which already feels the chill and solitude of the tomb, prolongs its last resistance to death.

The only noteworthy institutions Utrecht contains are the mint and the school for native and colonial military doctors. The ancient manufactories of that beautiful velvet so long famous in Europe have disappeared. With the exception of the cathedral there are no monuments. The Municipal Palace, which preserves some old keys and some ancient banners, as well as the table on which the Peace of Utrecht was signed, was built as late as 1830. The Royal Palace, which I did not see, must be the most modest of royal palaces, as the Dutch guides, who never overlook anything, did not drag me to it.

But this palace, if tradition tells the truth, witnessed an amusing adventure which befell Napoleon the Great. During his very brief sojourn in Utrecht he occupied the bed-room of his brother Louis, which was next to the bath-room. It is known that wherever he went he took a man-servant with him, whose exclusive duty it was to have a bath in readiness for him at any hour of the night or day. The evening

he arrived at Utrecht, in a bad temper as usual whenever he was in Holland, he went to bed early, leaving his bed-room door open, tradition does not say whether on purpose or by accident. The bath-servant, a good-natured Breton, after he had prepared the bath in another room, went to bed too in a bed-room not far from the imperial chamber. Toward midnight he was awakened suddenly by pains, jumped out of bed, and very sleepily began to feel for the door. He found it, but, unfortunately, not being familiar with the house, instead of going where he wished to go, he stopped opposite the emperor's door. He pushed, the door yielded, and entering he tipped over a large chair. A terrible voice—*that* voice—cried, "Who is there?" The poor young man, frozen with fear, tried to answer, but the words died on his lips; he tried to go out by the way he came in, but could not find the door; horrified, trembling, he tried to find another door. "Who are you?" thundered the emperor, jumping to his feet. The servant, now beside himself, ran round the room groping his way, tumbled against a table, and overturned another chair. Then Napoleon, confident of some treachery, seized his large silver watch, rushed at the unhappy wretch, clutched him by the throat, and, crying for help with all his might, rained blows on his head. Servants, chamberlains, aides-de-camp, the prefect of the palace, rushed in with swords and lights, and found the great Napoleon and the poor

servant, both in their night-shirts, amid a terrible confusion, looking at each other, the one perfectly amazed, the other in meek supplication as in a pantomime. The report of the event spread in Holland and over the whole of Europe. As usual, it changed as it passed from mouth to mouth; people talked of an assassination, a conspiracy, a successful murder, of Napoleon buried, of the universe turned topsy-turvy, while the cause of all the hubbub was the bad dinner eaten by a man-servant.

But the prince who left most records in Utrecht was Louis XIV. The French say you go to Utrecht to see the reverse side of the Great King's medal. This reverse side is the war of 1670, during which he made a long stay in that town.

On the reverse side of Louis XIV.'s medal is written one of the most glorious and poetic pages of the history of Holland.

France and England made an alliance to conquer Holland. For what reason? Well, there was no reason. When the States General demanded an explanation, the ministers of the King of France answered, alleging newspaper impertinence and a medal coined in Holland with an inscription irreverent to Louis XIV. The King of England, on his part, gave as a pretext a picture in which some English vessels were represented as captured and burned, and stated that the Netherland fleet had not saluted an English ship. They spent fifty million

francs in preparations for the war. France put to sea a fleet of thirty ships armed with cannon, England a fleet of a hundred sailing vessels. The French army, of a hundred thousand disciplined veteran soldiers, accompanied by formidable artillery, was joined by the army of the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, in all twenty thousand men. The names of the generals were Condé, Turenne, Vauban, and Luxembourg: the minister Louvois presided over the staff; the historian Pellisson followed to write the heroic exploits; Louis XIV., the greatest king of the century, accompanied the army surrounded by his splendid court, escorted like an Asiatic monarch by a phalanx of noblemen, cadets, plumed, silvered, and gilded Swiss. All this power and grandeur, which was enough to crush an immense empire, threatened a little country abandoned by all, defended only by twenty-five thousand soldiers and by a prince twenty-two years of age, unprovided with the tools of war, torn by factions, infested by traitors and spies. War was declared, the splendid army of the Great King began its triumphal march, Europe looked on. Louis XIV., at the head of an army of thirty thousand soldiers commanded by Turenne, scattered money and favors along the road, which opened before him as though he were a deity. Four cities fell into his hands at one swoop. All the fortresses of the Rhine and Yssel fell. At the sight of the pompous royal vanguard the enemy van-

ished. The invading army passed the Rhine without meeting with resistance, and this passage was celebrated as a wonderful event by the army, in Paris, and in all the French towns. Doesburgh, Zutphen, Arnhem, Nosenburg, Nimeguen, Schenk, and Bommel fell. Utrecht sent the keys of its gates to the conquering king. Every hour, night and day, brought the news of a fresh triumph. The provinces of Gelderland and Overyssel submitted. Naarden, near to Amsterdam, was taken. Four French cavaliers advanced as far as the gates of Muiden, two miles from the capital. The country was a prey to desolation. Amsterdam was preparing to open its doors to the invaders: the States General sent four deputies to ask mercy from the king. To such a state was reduced the republic which was once the ruler of monarchs. The deputies arrived at the enemy's camp, but the king would not admit them to his presence, and Louvois received them with scorn. Finally the conditions of peace were intimated to them. Holland was to cede all the provinces beyond the Rhine and all the roads by sea or land by which the enemy could penetrate into the heart of the country; she was to pay twenty million francs, embrace the Catholic faith, and send the King of France a gold medal every year, on which which was to be engraved that Holland owed her liberty to Louis XIV., and must accept the conditions imposed by the King of England and the Princes of

Münster and Cologne. The news of these outrageous, insupportable demands filled Amsterdam with despair. The States General, the nobility, and the people resolved to defend themselves to the last. They broke the dykes of Muiden which restrained the sea, and the waters burst over the cherished land, greeted with cries of joy as an ally and a savior. The country round Amsterdam, the innumerable villas, the flourishing villages, Delft, Leyden, all the neighboring towns, were flooded: all was changed; Amsterdam was now a fortress surrounded by the sea and defended by a bulwark of vessels. Holland was no longer a state, but a fleet, which, when every other hope of safety was lost, would carry her riches, magistrates, and honor to the remote ports of the colonies. Farewell, plumed cavaliers, formidable artillery, pompous officers, theatrical triumphs! Admiral Ruyter routed the English and French fleets, protected the coasts of Holland, and led the Indian merchant fleet into the port of the island of Texel. The Prince of Orange sacrificed his riches to the state, inundated other districts, shook Spain, won over the Governor of Flanders, who sent him some regiments, gained the ear of the Emperor of Germany, who sent Montecuccoli to his aid at the head of twenty thousand soldiers, obtained help from the Elector of Brandenburg, and persuaded England to make peace. So he resisted France until the winter, which covered Holland with ice and snow

and arrested the invading army. With the return of spring the battles recommenced on land and sea. Fortune smiled sometimes on the French arms, but neither the caution of the Great King, the genius of his famous generals, nor the force of his powerful army was sufficient to wrest the victory from the republic. In vain Condé tried to penetrate into the heart of inundated Holland; in vain Turenne labored to prevent the Prince of Orange from joining the army of Montecuccoli: the Dutch took possession of Bonn and attacked the Bishop of Münster. The King of England withdrew from the alliance; the French army was obliged to retire from the undertaking. The invasion had been a triumphal march, the retreat was a precipitous flight. The triumphal arches raised in Paris to celebrate the conquest were not even finished when the vanguard of the routed army arrived, and Louis XIV., on whom Europe smiled at the beginning of the war, now found himself at loggerheads with the whole continent. Thus little Holland triumphed over the Grand Monarchy, the love of country over greed of conquest, despair over arrogance, and justice over force.

A few miles from Utrecht, near a beautiful wood, is the village of Zeist, which is reached by a drive bordered with parks and villas belonging to the rich men of Rotterdam. In this village is a colony of those renowned United Brethren, Bohemian Breth-

ren, or Moravian Brethren, a religious sect derived from those founded by Valdus and John Huss, who turned Europe topsy-turvy. I had a great desire to see the direct descendants of those Hussites "who were burned at all stakes, hanged on all gallows, nailed on every cross, broken on every wheel, torn in pieces by every horse;" so I took a run over to Zeist. This house of the Moravians was founded toward the middle of the last century, and contains about two hundred and fifty persons, counting men, women, and children. The appearance of the place is as austere as the life of its inmates. There are two huge courtyards, separated by a wide street, each of which is closed on three sides by a large building as bare as a barrack. In one of these buildings are the unmarried, the married, and the schools; in the other the widows and girls, the church, the pastor, and the head of the community. The ground floor is occupied by warehouses, which contain merchandise, partly the work of the Moravians, such as gloves, soap, and candles; partly bought to be sold again at a fixed price and very cheap. The church is nothing but a large room, with two galleries for strangers and some rough benches for the brethren. The inside of the building looks like a convent. There are simply long corridors with small rooms on either side, in each of which a brother lives, meditates, works, and prays. The life of the brethren is most rigorous. They profess, outwardly at

The New Canal, Utrecht.



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least, the Confession of Augsburg. They admit original sin, but believe that the death of Jesus Christ has entirely cleansed mankind. They hold that the unity of the Church consists rather in charity, which ought to unite the disciples of Christ into one way of thinking and feeling, than in uniformity of worship. In a certain sense they practise the community of goods and fill the common treasury by voluntary contributions. Among themselves they exercise all the necessary professions, such as medicine, nursing, ministry, and teaching. The superiors can punish by reproof, excommunication, and expulsion from the fraternity. The occupations of the day are regulated as in a college—prayers, private meetings, lectures, work, religious exercises at certain hours and among the brethren of a given class. To give an idea of the order that reigns in this fraternity it is enough to mention, among many other strange customs, that the different condition of the women is indicated by the color of the ribbon they wear on their heads. Girls up to ten years of age have a rose-colored ribbon, up to eighteen a red one, and a pale pink one up to the day they are married. The married women wear blue ribbons, and the widows white. Thus in this fraternity everything is classified, pre-established, measured; life passes as a machine works, man moves like an automaton, regulations take the place of will, and time governs thought. When I entered the middle of the building I saw

nothing but two immovable servants on a doorstep and a girl with a red ribbon at the window. The courtyards were deserted; I did not hear a fly buzz or see any sign of life. After I had looked about here and there, as one looks at a cemetery through the bars of the railing, I thoughtfully resumed the road to Utrecht.

BROEK.

BROEK.

FROM the moment I began to write the first pages of this book the thought of the pleasure I should feel when I arrived at the village of Broek incited me to continue; for there were some days when I felt discouraged and tired, and inclined to throw all my papers into the fire; but the same thought always roused me from this prostration of mind. The image of Broek was my guiding star. "How long will it be before you go to Broek?" they used to ask me at home. And I answered with a sigh, "Not for two months—twenty days—a week." At last came the much-desired day. I was merry and impatient; I wished to express myself at the same time with pen, brush, and voice; I had so much to say I did not know where to begin, and I laughed at myself, just as my readers are now probably laughing at me.

In the various towns where I had stopped on my journey from Rotterdam to Amsterdam I had heard the village of Broek spoken of several times, but always casually, in a way calculated rather to arouse than satisfy my curiosity.

This name Broek when mentioned in company

made every one laugh. When I had asked some people why they laughed, they answered, "Because it is ridiculous." One man at the Hague said to me, half peevishly, half in jest, "Oh, when will strangers leave that precious Broek alone? Is there nothing else about us to ridicule?" At Amsterdam my host at the hotel, when tracing out my road on a map, smiled to himself as much as to say, "How childish!" I had asked every one for particulars, and no one had been willing to give them. They shrugged their shoulders and said, "You will see." Only from a chance word which I caught now and then was I able to gather that it was a very strange village, and had been famous for its peculiarities since the last century, and that it had been described, illustrated, derided, and taken by strangers as a text for a number of caricatures, fables, and jokes at the expense of the Dutch.

You may imagine the curiosity which tormented me. It is enough to say that I dreamed of Broek every night, and I should fill a book if I were to describe all the fantastic, marvellous, impossible villages that appeared to me in my sleep. It was an effort for me to first take the trip to Utrecht, and on my return to Amsterdam I instantly set out for the mysterious village.

Broek is in North Holland, about halfway between Edam and Amsterdam, and not far from the coast of the Zuyder Zee. I had therefore to cross the Gulf

A Woman of Brock.



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of the Y and go some way down the Northern Canal.

I embarked early in the morning on one of the little steamers that leave every day for Alkmaar and the Helder, and in a few minutes arrived at the Grand Canal.

This is the largest canal in Holland, and one of the most marvellous works accomplished in Europe during the nineteenth century. All know how and why it was opened. In former times, to reach the port of Amsterdam it was necessary for large ships to cross the Zuyder Zee Gulf, which was covered with sandbanks and was agitated by furious tempests. The passage was long and dangerous, particularly where the Zuyder Zee Gulf joins that of the Y, because of a great sandbank called Pampus which large ships could not pass over without lightening their cargo and being towed, a performance which cost both time and money. To make an easier way to the port of Amsterdam this large canal was built, running from the Gulf of the Y as far as the North Sea, and crossing nearly the whole of North Holland. It is about eighty kilometres long, forty metres wide, and six deep. It was begun in 1819 and finished in 1825, at a cost of thirty million francs. By this means, when the weather is favorable, the largest ships reach the port of Amsterdam from the North Sea in less than twenty-four hours. Nevertheless, in comparison with other maritime towns, the city is still at a disadvantage as regards

commerce, since the entrance to the Northern Canal, near the island of Texel, is very difficult, and in the canal itself the ships must be towed, so that the trip costs about a thousand francs, and during severe winters, when the waters freeze, navigation is stopped or impeded, and sometimes as much as thirty thousand florins are spent to open a passage. But the courage of the Dutch did not fail even before these difficulties, for they have opened a fresh road for commerce. Another canal, on which they are working, will cross the Gulf of the Y in the direction of its greatest length, will cut across the downs, and open into the sea near the village of Wyk-aan-zee, thus separating North Holland from the continent. This canal will be twenty-five kilometres in length and as wide as the Suez Canal; by means of it ships will be able to arrive at Amsterdam from the sea in two hours and thirty minutes; a great part of the Gulf of the Y, filled up with the material taken from the bed of the canal, will be converted into arable soil, and the path of the inundations by the sea, which continually threaten Amsterdam, will be closed for ever. The works, which were begun in 1866, are almost finished, and on the 25th of September, 1872, a ship belonging to the society that is conducting this great enterprise glided in triumph over the new water-way, greeted joyfully by the city as a herald announcing prosperity and fortune.

As soon as our steamer had passed the monu-

mental lock of the Northern Canal, Amsterdam, the gulf, the port, everything disappeared from view, because at that spot the water of the canal is almost three metres lower than the level of the sea, and I could see nothing but a myriad of sail-yards, of tips of steeples, of the arms of windmills, which projected above the very high embankments between which we glided. From time to time the steamer passed through a narrow lock, the banks were deserted, the canal closed us in on every side, the horizon was hidden; it seemed as though we were steaming through the windings of an inundated fortress. After half an hour of this stealthy navigation we arrived at a village, a real riddle of a village, formed of a few colored cottages arranged along a dyke, almost entirely hidden by a row of trees cut in the shape of fans and planted in front of the doors, as if to hide the secrets of domestic life from the gaze of passers-by. The steamer passed through another gate and came out into the open country, where quite a new scene presented itself. As the level of the waters of the canal was much higher than the surrounding country, the boat was gliding along on a level with the tops of the trees and houses that flanked the dykes, and the people who were walking along the paths looked up at the steamer just as we had done a short time before to see the people who were passing on the dykes. We met ships towed by horses; barges drawn by entire families, put in a

line according to their age, from grandfather down to grandchild, and in front of the grandchild a dog; steamers coming from Alkmaar and from the Helder, full of peasant-women with gold circles round their foreheads. On every side we saw sail-boats, and as the canals were hidden by the green dykes, it seemed as though they were gliding over the grass of the meadows.

When we had arrived at our goal I descended, watched the steamer disappear, and then, all alone, I took the road to Broek, bordered by a canal on the right-hand side and a hedge on the left. I had an hour's walk before me. The green country was outlined by a thousand canals, dotted with groups of trees and windmills, and silent as a desert. Beautiful black and white cows wandered along the canals or rested on the banks, with no one to tend them; flocks of ducks and geese as white as swans were splashing about in the creeks; now and then a boat glided past in which a peasant was rowing from one field to another. This great plain, animated by this slow, silent life, inspired me with such an agreeable feeling of peace that the sweetest music would have seemed to me a troublesome noise.

After half an hour's walk, although nothing of Broek was yet visible excepting the tip of the steeple, I began to see something here and there that announced the neighborhood of a village. The road crossed over a dyke by the side of which were

houses. One of these, a wooden hut, with a roof that hardly reached the level of the street,—a rough, shattered, crooked affair that seemed to be a den rather than a house, had at the windows pert little white curtains tied with blue ribbons, and in the room I saw a table covered with cups, glasses, flowers, and bric-à-brac which shone as though they were crystal. When I had passed this house I saw two stakes driven into the ground to prop up a hedge; both were painted in blue and white stripes like the two ends of the oriflamme raised for public fêtes. A little farther on I found a peasant's cottage, in front of which was an exhibition of buckets, benches, rakes, hoes, and stakes, all colored red, blue, white, or yellow, and striped and bordered with other colors, like the belongings of a mountebank. I went on a little way and saw rustic houses, their windows ornamented with lace, ribbons, iron network, movable looking-glasses, and hanging-baskets, with many-colored tiles and varnished doors. The farther I went the greater became the brilliancy and variety of the colors, the cleanliness, the brightness, and pomp. I saw embroidered curtains with rose-colored ribbons at the windows of the windmills, carts and agricultural implements with their blades, bands, and nails shining like silver, varnished wooden houses, red and white railings and fences, windows with their glass panes bordered by two or three lines of different hues, and lastly, the strangest of oddities,

trees with their trunks painted gray from root to branch.

Laughing to myself at these eccentricities, I arrived at a large basin surrounded by thick leafy trees, beyond which, on the opposite bank, projected a steeple. I looked around; no one was to be seen but a boy lying on the grass. "Broek?" I demanded. He laughed and answered, "Broek." Then I looked more attentively, and amid the green of the trees I saw such ridiculous, gaudy colors that an exclamation of surprise escaped me.

I went round the basin and passed over a little wooden bridge as white as snow; I went down a narrow street; and gazed. Broek! Broek! Broek! I recognized it; there could be no mistake: this could not be other than Broek!

Imagine a cardboard manger for a Christmas festival built by a boy of eight—a town built up in the window of a Nuremburg toy-shop, a village constructed by a chorus-writer on the design of a Chinese fan, a collection of puppet-shows belonging to a wealthy mountebank, a group of villas made for a travelling showman, the caprice of an Oriental under the influence of opium, something which reminds one at the same time of Japan, Tartary, India, Switzerland, and of Pompadour, of those sugar edifices that confectioners put in their shop-windows, a medley of the barbarous, delicate, presumptuous, effeminate, ingenuous, and the stupid, which at one and the

same time offends good taste, provokes laughter, and inspires affection,—imagine, in short, the most childish eccentricity to which the name of village can be given and you will form a vague idea of Broek.

All the houses are surrounded by gardens, and separated from the street by sky-blue palings in the shape of a balustrade or a railing, with wooden fruits, apples or oranges, stuck on the points of each pale. The streets that have these palings on either side are very narrow, paved with small bricks of different colors placed sideways, and arranged in all manner of designs, so that from a distance they seem to be streets covered with Turkish shawls. The greater number of the houses are of wood, only one story in height and very small. Some are rose-color; others black, gray, purple, light blue, or the color of mountain grass. Their roofs are covered with varnished tiles arranged like a chess-board; the gutters are ornamented with a sort of wooden festoon perforated like lace; the pointed façades are surmounted with a small weathercock, a little lance, or something which looks like a bunch of flowers; the windows have panes of red or blue glass, and are adorned with curtains, embroideries, ribbons, nets, fringes, tassels, and trifles; the doors are painted and gilded and decorated with all sorts of bas-reliefs representing flowers, figures, and trophies, in the midst of which the name and profession of the proprietor can be read. Nearly every house has two doors, one in

front and one behind, the last for every-day entrance and exit, the former opened only on great occasions, such as births, deaths, and marriages.

The gardens are as peculiar as the houses. They seem to have been laid out for dwarfs. The paths are hardly wide enough to walk in; one could embrace the flower-beds; the arbors would barely hold two persons closely curled up; the myrtle hedges would scarcely reach to the knees of a four-year-old child.

Between the arbors and the flower-beds run little canals which seem made to float paper boats. They are crossed by superfluous wooden bridges with colored pillars and parapets; there are ponds the size of a bath, which are almost concealed by liliputian boats tied with red cords to blue stakes; tiny staircases, miniature kitchen-gardens, crossways, bowers, little doors, and tiny gates. Everything could be measured with the hand, crossed at a leap, and demolished by a blow. Moreover, there are trees cut in the shape of fans, plumes, disks, trapezes, with their trunks colored white and blue, and here and there wooden kennels for the domestic animals painted and decorated like royal doll palaces.

After looking at the first houses and gardens, I entered the village. There was not a living soul in the street or at the windows. All the doors were closed, all the curtains drawn, all the canals deserted, all the boats motionless. The village is built on such

In a Dutch Garden, Broek.



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a plan that one cannot see more than four or five cottages from any one spot, and as one advances a house disappears, another is partly revealed, and a third shows itself entirely, and everywhere among the trunks of trees stripes and touches of the brightest color shine forth and vanish, like a troop of masqueraders who are playing at hide-and-seek. At every step one discovers another stage effect, a fresh combination of hues, a novel caprice, some new absurdity. It seems as though every moment a population of automatons must issue from the doors with Turkish cymbals and tabors in their hands, like the figures that play on the street-organs. Fifty steps take one round a house, over a bridge, through a garden, across a street, and back where one started. A child seems a man, and a man a giant. Everything is minute, compact, affected, painted, imitated, unnatural, and puerile. At first it makes one laugh; then one gets vexed at thinking that the inhabitants of the village will imagine that strangers consider it beautiful. The caricature appears odious, and one would like to accuse all the masters of the houses of imbecility; one feels a desire to declare to them that their famous Broek is an insult to art and nature, and that they have neither good sense nor good taste. But when one has let off steam in invectives, one begins to laugh again, and laughter prevails.

After walking about for a little while without

meeting a soul, I felt a desire to see the interior of one of the houses. While I was looking around in search of a hospitable being, I heard some one call "Monsieur!" and turning round saw a woman in a doorway, who asked me, timidly, "Would you like to see a private house?" I accepted her invitation; the woman left her wooden shoes on the doorstep, as is the custom in that country, and led me inside. She was a poor widow, as she told me when we entered, and had only one room, but what a room! The floor was covered with matting scrupulously clean, the furniture shone like ebony, the handles of the chest of drawers, the lock of the box, the raised work on the bureau, the nails of the chairs, even the nails in the wall, seemed to be of silver. The chimney-piece was a real little temple all covered with colored majolica tiles polished as if they had never seen smoke. On a table was a copper inkstand, an iron pen, and some trifles which would have attracted attention in a jeweller's shop. Wherever one turned everything shone. Not seeing a bed, I asked the good woman where she slept. In answer she moved toward a wall and opened two folding doors which were hidden by hangings. The bed, in that house, as in all the others, was shut into a sort of cupboard in the wall, and consisted of a frame and a straw mattress extended over the bottom part of the wall, without boards and trestles. These beds may be comfortable in the winter, but must be

stifling in summer. I looked at the various utensils for cleaning. There were enough to furnish a shop —big brooms, little brooms, tooth-brushes, dusters, scrubbing-brushes, scrapers, rakes, rubbers, sticks, skins, feather-dusters, aquafortis, whiting for the window-panes, rouge for the forks and spoons, coal-dust for the copper, emery for the iron utensils, brick powder for the floors, and even toothpicks to pick out tiny bits of straw from between the bricks.

She gave me the most curious details about the mania for cleaning for which Broek is famous throughout Holland. Not very long ago there was an inscription couched in these terms at the entrance of the village: "Before or after sunset no one is allowed to smoke in the village of Broek, excepting with a pipe having a cover (so that the ashes shall not be scattered), and any one crossing the village on horseback must get out of the saddle and lead the horse." It was also forbidden to cross the village in a carriage or with sheep, cows, or any other animals which might dirty the streets, and, although this prohibition no longer exists, still from habit carts and animals are usually driven around Broek. In front of all the houses there used to be (and at some places still are) stone spittoons into which smokers spit from the window. The custom of not wearing shoes in the house is still generally observed, so that heaps of shoes, boots, and wooden clogs are seen in front of all the doors. There is a story that a popular revolt

was caused at Broek by some strangers who scattered their cherry-stones in the street; but it is quite true that every citizen who sees a leaf or a bit of straw blown before his house by the wind goes and picks it up and throws it into the canal. That the people go five hundred paces out of the village to dust their shoes; that there are boys paid to blow the dust from between the bricks in the streets four times an hour; and that in certain houses the guests are carried over the threshold, so as not to dirty the pavements—these things, the woman told me, were good, characteristic stories, but probably never occurred. However, before allowing me to leave she told me an anecdote which if true would make these eccentricities seem possible. "At one time," she said, "the mania for cleaning reached such a point that the women of Broek neglected even their religious duties for scrubbing and washing. The village pastor, after trying every sort of persuasion to end this scandal, thought of another plan. He preached a long sermon in which he said that every Dutch woman who had faithfully fulfilled her duties toward God in this world would find in the next a house packed full of furniture and stored with the most various and precious articles of use and ornament, which, not being distracted by other occupations, she would be able to brush, wash, and polish for all eternity without ever finishing. The promise of this sublime recompense, the thought of this extreme happiness, filled

the women with such fervor and piety that from that time forward they have never neglected their religious duties, and have had no need of another stimulus."

Yet it is not this mania for cleaning nor the eccentric architecture I have described that is the cause of the semi-serious celebrity of the village of Broek. This celebrity was derived from an eccentricity of customs and habits to which those of the present day are not to be compared. Broek of to-day is but the ghost of the Broek of the past. To be persuaded of this it is necessary only to visit a house located at the entrance of the village and open to strangers, a complete model of the ancient houses, and preserved by the proprietor as an historical monument of past folly. On the outside, the house is not different from the others: it is a puppet-show. The marvellous part consists of the rooms and the garden. The rooms are tiny, and resemble so many bazaars; a description of each would fill a volume. The Dutch mania of heaping one thing upon another, and of seeking beauty and elegance in the excess of incongruous objects, is here brought to the highest degree of absurdity. There are porcelain figures on the cupboards, Chinese cups and sugar-bowls on and under the tables, plates fastened on the walls from ceiling to floor, clocks, ostrich eggs, boats, ships, shells, vases, plates, glasses placed in every corner and concealed in every nook; pictures which represent different figures according to the angle at which they

are viewed; cupboards full of hundreds of trifles and ornaments without name, senseless decorations, a crowding and disorder, a confusion of colors,—bad taste so innocently displayed that it is at once amusing and provoking. But all this extravagance is far surpassed in the garden. Here one sees bridges placed for ornament over streamlets only a hand's-breadth wide, grottoes, tiny cascades, small rustic churches, Greek temples, Chinese kiosks, Indian pagodas, painted statues, little dolls with gilded hands and feet jumping out of flower-baskets, life-size automatons that smoke and spin, cabinets which open at the touch of a spring and show a company of puppets seated at table, little ponds with tin swans and geese floating in them, beds covered with mosaic-work in shells, with a fine china vase in the middle, trees which represent human figures, box bushes cut in the shape of steeples, churches, naves, chimeras, peacocks with outspread tails, and children stretching out their arms; paths, cottages, hedges, flowers, plants all twisted into unnatural shapes, tortured and deformed. There was a time when all the houses and gardens in Broek were like this.

But now not only the appearance of the village, but the population, is in great part changed. In former times Broek was called the village of millionaires, because nearly all its inhabitants were wealthy merchants who settled there for the love of retire-

ment and peace. Little by little, ennui, the ridicule to which their houses and they themselves were subjected, the importunity of travellers, the desire for more beautiful places, drove away nearly all the rich families, and the few who remained ceased from the emulation which all these childish marvels had created, and allowed the old order to disappear. Now Broek has about a thousand inhabitants, of whom the greater number make cheese, and the others are shopkeepers, farmers, and mechanics who live on their incomes.

Although Broek has declined, it is still visited by almost all strangers who travel in Holland. In one room of the house I have described there was an enormous book containing thousands of cards and autographs of visitors from every country. The greater number of the visitors were Englishmen and Americans, the smallest number Italians, and these few were almost all members of the nobility of Southern Italy. Among many illustrious names I saw those of Victor Hugo, Walter Scott, Gambetta, and Émile Augier the dramatist. Among the souvenirs there is a paper-weight presented by the Emperor and Empress of Russia to a citizen of Broek as a sign of their gratitude for the hospitality he had offered the Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovitch.

Apropos of illustrious visitors, Alexander of Russia and Napoleon the Great have been at Broek. Local tradition recounts that both of them, wishing

to see the interior of one of the houses, were obliged before entering to slip on some very coarse stockings which were given them by the servant, so that they would not dirty the floor with their boots. I dare not assert that this is true, but it is told in certain memoirs of Napoleon's travels in Holland that at Broek it irritated him to see the streets deserted and the people shut in the houses staring at him from behind the window-panes, as if they were keeping watch over him for fear he should soil the railings of the gardens. The Emperor Joseph II. also paid a visit to Broek, but it is said that, having taken no letters of introduction, he could not enter any house. When one of his aides-de-camp insisted on their allowing His Majesty to enter, the mistress of a house answered: "I do not know your emperor, and if he were even the burgomaster of Amsterdam in person, I do not receive those I do not know."

When I had visited the old house and garden, I entered a little coffee-house where a barefoot girl understood my sign language, and brought me half of a good Edam cheese, eggs, and butter, each placed under a majolica cover, protected by a wire netting, and hidden by the whitest embroidered table napkin. Afterward I was escorted by a boy, who talked to me by signs, to see a farm. Many people among us who wear silk hats and gold watches do not live in such clean and agreeable apartments as those in which the cows of Broek give themselves

A Dutch Cottage, Brock.



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airs. Before entering you must wipe your boots on a mat in front of the door, and if you do not do this of your own accord you are requested to do so. The flooring of the stables is of different-colored bricks, which are so clean that you can pass your hands over them; the windows are adorned with muslin curtains and pots of flowers; the mangers are painted, the cows are combed, brushed, and washed, and, so that they shall not dirty themselves, they have their tails supported by cords which are fastened to nails in the ceiling; a stream of running water passes continually through the stables and carries away any impurities. Excepting under the legs of the cattle you do not see a straw or a spot, and the air is so pure that if you were blindfolded you would think you were in a drawing-room. The rooms of the peasants, the rooms where the cheese is made, the courtyards, the very corners, are all equally clean and shining.

Before leaving for Amsterdam I took another turn round the village, taking care to hide my cigar when any woman with a golden diadem looked at me from a window. I passed over two or three white bridges, touched several boats with my foot, stopped a short time in front of the gayest of the houses, and then, not seeing a living soul in the streets or gardens, I retraced my solitary steps on the horse of St. Francis, with that feeling of sadness that always accompanies the satisfaction of a great curiosity.

ZAANDAM.

ZAANDAM.

THE greater number of strangers after visiting Broek and the town of Zaandam leave for Friesland, and return to the Hague persuaded that they have seen Holland. On the contrary, I wished to push on as far as the extremity of North Holland, thinking that I should find quaint customs and ancient manners more strictly preserved in this out-of-the-way province, unfrequented by strangers and not overrun by visitors. The danger of not being able to make myself understood, of getting into bad hotels, of finding myself alone, discouraged and melancholy, in towns so small as not even to be marked on the map of the guide-books—towns that the most patient travellers pass by,—none of these things turned me from my purpose. One fine August morning the demon of travel, the most powerful of all demons who take possession of the human soul, bore me and my portmanteau aboard a steamer leaving for Zaandam, started me the same day for Alkmaar, the metropolis of cheese, and on the same evening bought me a second-class ticket for the Helder, the Gibraltar of the North.

Zaandam, viewed from the Gulf of the Y, presents

the appearance of a fortress crowned with innumerable towers, from the tops of which the desperate citizens are signalling for help to a distant army. Hundreds of the highest windmills rise among the houses, on the dykes, along the coast, over all the country round the town: some are draining the land; others crushing out colza oil, one of the most important commercial industries of Zaandam; others pulverizing a sort of volcanic tufa carried down by the Rhine, which is used to make a special kind of cement for hydraulic works; others are sawing wood, winnowing barley, grinding colors, making paper, mustard, enamel, rope, starch, and paste. The town comes into view just as one is entering the port.

It is like a scene in a pastoral drama.

The town is built along the two banks of a river called the Zaan, which flows into the Y, and encircles a small basin formed by the Y itself, which serves as a harbor. The two equal parts into which the town is divided are connected by a drawbridge which opens to allow ships to pass. Round the port there are only a few streets and houses, for the chief part of Zaandam extends along the banks of the Zaan.

The steamer went so close as to touch the shore. I descended, freed myself from a band of ciceroni, and in a few moments was walking along the principal streets.

Zaandam is a sort of large Broek, although less childish and prettier than the little Broek.

The houses are wooden, and are but one story in height. They have pointed gables and are nearly all painted green. There are streets along which one sees no other color. They look as though they belonged to a town of box and myrtle. As at Broek, the tiles of the roofs are varnished, the windows adorned with flowers and curtains, the streets paved with bricks and clean as the floor of a drawing-room. Everywhere one can see one's self reflected in the window-panes, in the brass door-plates, in the articles placed on the window-sills. The whole town breathes an air of cheerfulness, freshness, and innocence which inspires affection. It is rich and populous, and yet it seems but a mere village. It has every feature of a Dutch city, and at the same time there is about it a strange and foreign look which distinguishes it from all the other cities.

It was a holiday, and the principal streets were filled with people going to or from church. My attention was first attracted by the head-dresses of the women. Under a hat trimmed with flowers they wear a sort of lace cap which falls to their shoulders, and below this peep out two knots of tightly-curled hair resembling bunches of grapes. The circle of gold or silver which surrounds the head and shines through the lace of the cap ends on the temples in two little square plates turned outward, with a rosette in the centre. Another plate, gilded and chased, a sort of metal ribbon tied to the circle, nobody knows how,

crosses the forehead obliquely, and descends until it almost touches the opposite temple or the eye or the space between the eyebrows, so that it appears to be a piece of the circle itself, broken and left hanging either through negligence or for ornament. Two large pins, stuck in vertically at the top of the circle, rise like horns above the two knots of curls. Very long earrings hang from the ears, the neck is ornamented by several rows of necklaces, the bosom with studs, brooches, buckles, and chains enough to fill a jeweller's window. All the women, with slight differences, dress in this manner, and, as they are all fair and pink-cheeked and all dress with equally bad taste, a stranger at first sight does not distinguish between a peasant and a lady. No one would say that this head-dress and the superabundance of ornaments are either beautiful or elegant, yet those fair faces framed in the lace and gold, the mingling of the patrician with the peasant, of the refined with the coarse, of the proud with the ingenuous, has a grace peculiar to itself which accords wonderfully with the appearance of the town, and is pleasing in the end.

Even the children have their diadems and their laces. The men are generally dressed in black. Children, men, girls, women, young and old, all wear an expression of content—something primitive, virginal, and fresh, that makes it hard to believe that they are Europeans of the present day. One imagines one's self to be on another continent, in the midst of

another civilization, in a city where riches are gathered without fatigue, where life flows on without passion, where society moves tranquilly without friction, and no one desires aught but peace. And if, while one is thinking these thoughts, the clock of the nearest steeple rings out some old national air, then the illusion is complete, and one feels a desire to carry one's family and friends to Zaandam and to end one's peaceful days in one of the little green houses.

But if this beatitude be only an illusion, it is a fact that Zaandam is one of the richest cities in Holland—that shipbuilders who are millionaires live in those little green cottages, that there are no families without bread and no children without teachers.

Besides this, Zaandam possesses what Napoleon I. called the finest monument in Holland—the cottage of Peter the Great, in honor of whom the town was for a time, and still is by many, called Czardam or Saardam. A legion of ciceroni whisper the name of this famous cottage in the ear of every stranger who arrives at Zaandam, and it is the goal of all who visit the town.

The time and reason of the great emperor dwelling in this cottage are known to all. After he had conquered the Tartars and Turks, and had made a triumphal entry into Moscow, the young czar wished to travel through the principal European states to study their arts and industries. Accompanied by

three ambassadors, four secretaries, twelve noblemen, fifty guards, and one dwarf, he left his own states, in April, 1697, crossed Livonia, passed through Prussia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Berlin, and Westphalia, and arrived at Amsterdam fifteen days before his suite. In this city, unknown to all, he spent some time in the arsenals of the Admiralty, and then, in order to learn with his own eyes and hands the art of shipbuilding (for which the Dutch at that time were famous), he dressed himself as a sailor and went to Zaandam, where were the most famous arsenals. Here, under the name of Peter Michaelof, he entered the shipyard of a certain Mynheer Kalf, enrolled himself among the number of his workmen, worked as a ship-carpenter, smith, and rope-maker, and during his whole stay at Zaandam dressed like his fellow-laborers, ate the same food, and slept like them in a wooden hut, which is the one still shown. How long he remained in this city is not certainly known. Some say he was there for months; others believe, and this is more probable, that he was annoyed by the curiosity of the inhabitants, and remained there only a week. It is certain however, that when, after a short time, he returned to Amsterdam, he finished with his own hands in the shipyards of the East India Company a vessel with sixty guns, that he studied mathematics, physics, geography, anatomy, and painting, and that he left Amsterdam in January, 1698, to go to London.

The famous hut is at the extremity of Zaandam, facing the open country. It is encased in a small brick building erected by Anna Paulowna, Queen of Holland and a Russian by birth, to defend it from the weather. It is really a fisherman's hut, built of wood and consisting of two little rooms, and so dilapidated and leaning that if it were not propped up by the building that surrounds it a gust of wind would blow it over. In one room are three rough seats, a large table, a folding bed, and a large chimney built in the old Flemish style. In the second room hang two large portraits—one of Peter the Great dressed as a workman, and the other of the Empress Catherine. Russian and Dutch flags are draped from the ceiling. The table, the walls, the shutters, the doors, the beams, are all covered with names, verses, sentences, and inscriptions in every language. There is a slab of marble on which is written "Petro magno Alexander"—placed there by order of Emperor Alexander of Russia in memory of his visit in 1814. Another stone records the visit paid by the hereditary prince in 1839, and under it is a stanza by a Russian poet which runs: "Over this humble abode the holy angels watch. Czarevitch! bow thy head. This is the cradle of thy empire, here was the grandeur of Russia born." Other slabs commemorate the visits of kings and princes, and there are other verses, especially in Russian, which express the enthusiasm and joy of those who

have arrived at the goal of their pilgrimage. One of these inscriptions records that the carpenter Peter Michaelof from this hut directed the movements of the Muscovite army that was fighting against the Turks in the Ukraine.

On leaving I thought that if the most glorious day in the life of Peter the Great was that on which he fell asleep in this cottage after working with his own hands for the first time in his life, the happiest must have been that on which he returned thither after eighteen years in the height of his power and glory, and showed Catherine the place where by working as an artisan he had learned to be an emperor. The inhabitants of Zaandam speak of that day with pride as if it were an event they had witnessed. The czarina had remained at Wesel for her confinement; the czar arrived at Zaandam alone. It is easy to imagine with what joy and pride he was received by the merchants, sailors, and carpenters whose companion he had been eighteen years before. To the world he was the conqueror of Pultowa, the founder of St. Petersburg, the civilizer of Russia; to them he was *Peterbaas*, Master Peter, as they called him familiarly when working together; he was a son of Zaandam who had become an emperor; he was an old friend who had returned. Ten days after her confinement the czarina arrived, and also visited the hut. The emperor and empress, without suite or pomp, dined at the house of Mynheer Kalf, the ship-

Afternoon in Zaandam.

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OF

builder who had received the royal young artisan in his shipyard; the people accompanied him, crying, "Long life to Master Peter!" and Master Peter, who exterminated Russian nobles and boyars, who condemned his own son,—Master Peter the terrible ruler wept.

To go to Alkmaar, I took passage on a steamer that went up the Zaan as far as the Northern Canal, and consequently I saw East and West Zaandam, or all that part of the town which extends almost three miles along the two banks of the river. It is a spectacle that vindicates Broek a hundred times.

Every one remembers the first landscapes he painted as a child, when his father or uncle gave him a long-expected box of colors. Usually we wish to paint some delicious place, such as we dream of in school while we doze over the last Latin lesson toward the end of the month of June. To make this spot really delightful we attempt to put in a tiny space a villa, a garden, a lake, a wood, a meadow, a kitchen-garden, a river, a bridge, a grotto, a cascade, and we crowd them all together, and, that nothing shall escape the eye of the spectator, we paint everything in the brightest, gaudiest colors in the box, and when all is finished we fancy that we have not taken advantage of every bit of space, and stick a house here, a tree there, and a cottage at the bottom; and when at last it is no longer possible to put in

even a blade of grass, a stone, or a flower, we put down our brush quite satisfied with the work, and run to show it to the servant, who clasps her hands in wonder and exclaims that it is truly an earthly paradise. Well, Zaandam seen from the river is exactly like one of those landscapes.

All the houses are green, and the roofs are covered with the reddest of red tiles, on which rise turrets which are green too, surmounted by many-colored weathercocks or by striped wooden balls placed on iron poles; little towers crowned with balustrades and pavilions; buildings in the form of temples and villas; sheds and hovels, of a structure never seen before, crowded closely against each other and seeming to dispute the space—an architecture of expedients, all vanity and show. In the midst of these buildings are little streets hardly wide enough for one person to pass through, squares as narrow as rooms, courtyards little bigger than a table, canals down which only a duck could swim, and in front, between the houses and the banks of the river, are childish little gardens full of huts, chicken-houses, arbors, railings, toy windmills, and weeping willows. In front of these gardens, on the banks of the river, are little ports full of little green boats tied to little green posts. In the midst of this medley of gardens and sheds very high windmills rise on every side—these also painted green and striped in white or painted white and bordered with green. Their arms

are painted like flagstaffs, and are gilded and ornamented with circles of many shades. There are green steeples, varnished from the bottom to the top—churches that look like booths at a fair, checquered and bordered in every tint of the rainbow.

But the strangest thing of all is that the buildings, which are small enough at the entrance to the river, decrease in size as one proceeds, as if the population were distributed according to their height, until at the end there are sentinel-boxes, hen-coops, mouse-traps, hiding-places which seem to be the projections of a subterranean city, a diminutive architecture which at a distance of ten steps seems to be far away —the crumbs of a city, a real human beehive, where children look like giants and the cats jump from the pavement to the roof. Here, however, there still are gardens, but they are entirely filled by one bench, a summer-house capable of holding one person only, pavilions as large as umbrellas, weeping willows, little staircases, diminutive windmills, weathercocks, flowers, and color.

Is this really the serious work of men? one asks one's self in front of this spectacle. Is this really a city? Will it be here next year? Has it not rather been built for a festival, and next week will it not be all pulled down and piled up in the warehouse of some Amsterdam decorator? Ah, what jesters the Dutch are!

ALKMAAR.

ALKMAAR.

THE ship, after leaving Zaandam, glided for a long distance between two uninterrupted rows of windmills, stopped at several villages, turned into the Marken Vaart Canal, crossed the Lake of Alkmaar, and finally entered the great Northern Canal. However much I tried, I should never be able to express the feeling of loneliness, of separation and bewilderment, that came upon me in the midst of a crowd of peasant-women diademed like queens and as motionless as idols, while the steamer sped on with the smoothness of a gondola across a boundless, uniform plain under a heavy sky. At certain moments I asked myself how I had wandered there, where I was going, and when I should return. I felt homesick for Amsterdam and the Hague, as though the country through which I was passing was as far from the south of Holland as Southern Holland is from Italy, and I decided never again to travel alone, for it seemed to me that I should never return home.

At that moment I was in the bosom of North Holland—that little peninsula watered by the North Sea and the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee which is almost all

below the level of the waters that surround it. It is defended on one side by the dunes and on the other by immense dykes, and is intersected by an infinite number of canals, marshes, and lakes, which give it the appearance of a land partly submerged and destined to disappear under the waves. Over all the space that was visible only some groups of trees, a few sails, and windmills were to be seen.

The part of the Northern Canal through which the steamer was passing at that moment runs alongside of the Beemster, the largest tract of land drained in the seventeenth century, the bed of one of the forty-three lakes that originally covered the province of Alkmaar, and are now transformed into beautiful fields. This Beemster, which extends over an area of seven thousand hectares and is governed like the other polders by a committee elected by the proprietors (the expenses being paid by a tax levied at so much per hectare), is divided into a great many squares surrounded by streets paved with brick, and canals which give it the appearance of an immense chess-board. The land lays almost three and a half metres below the level of Amsterdam, and the rain-water has to be continually drawn off by windmills, which pour it into the canals, through which it flows to the sea.

In the entire polder there are about three hundred farms, where six thousand horned cattle and four hundred horses are pastured. The only trees are

poplars, elms, and willows, and these are grouped round the houses to protect them from the wind. Like the Beemster, so all the other polders consist entirely of meadow-land. The only objects that attract the attention on those green plains are the stakes that support the storks' nests, and occasionally an enormous bone of a whale, an ancient trophy of the Dutch fishermen, planted upright in the ground for the cows to rub against. All the produce is transported from farm to farm in boats; the houses are entered over drawbridges which are raised at night like the bridge over the moat of a fortress; the herds of cattle feed without shepherds; the ducks and swans paddle unwatched down the long canals; everything tells of security, abundance, and contentment. In fact, it is in these provinces that the famous breed of cattle to which Holland in a great measure owes her riches flourishes in all its beauty—those large, peaceful cows which give as much as thirty quarts of milk a day, descendants of those glorious animals that in the Middle Ages were taken to France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and Russia to improve the breeds of those countries. It is related that a drove of these cattle crossed the continent as far as Odessa, traversing step by step the road that the great Teutonic invasion had passed over. From the milk of these cows is made that exquisite Edam cheese, so called after a city in North Holland whose fame is world-wide. On market-days

all the towns in this province overflow with these fine red cheeses heaped up like cannon-balls in the streets and squares, and exhibited to strangers with an air of national pride. Alkmaar in one year sells more than four million kilogrammes of cheese, Hoorn three million, Purmerende two million, Medemblick and Enkhuizen seven or eight hundred thousand, and the whole of North Holland more than fifteen million francs' worth. All these details will make a poet or a young lady smile, and I understand that they would sound poorly in a sonnet, but . . . if we Italians did a few more things of this kind and wrote fewer sonnets!

As the steamer neared Alkmaar, I began as usual to arouse my curiosity by recalling to myself all I knew about Alkmaar, little dreaming in what a plight I should find my poor self within its walls. I painted it destroyed by John of Avesnes, Count of Holland, as a punishment for its rebellion. I followed the courageous carpenter who crossed the Spanish camp and carried from the Prince of Orange to the governor of the province the order to cut the dykes, and then lost the answer of the governor, which was found and read by Frederick, son of the Duke of Alva, a circumstance which induced him to abandon the siege so as not to die by drowning. I saw a group of scholars amusing themselves by looking at the snow-covered country through splinters of ice fastened to the tube of an inkstand, and the good

Metius came amongst them and from their game obtained the first idea of a spyglass. On a street-corner I met the painter Schornel with his head still wounded from a drubbing he had received in a fight in the taverns of Utrecht, where he had gone to get drunk with that fine fellow, John of Manberge, his master in art and dissipation. Finally, I imagined the beautiful women of Alkmaar, who by their modest and innocent demeanor were able to make the great Napoleon forget the stupidity of Amsterdam and his contempt for Broek. Meanwhile the steamer arrived at Alkmaar, where a porter who knew only three French words—*Monsieur*, *hôtel*, and *pourboir*—took the valise from my hand and dragged me off to a hotel.

Alkmaar offers nothing unusual to those who have seen other Dutch towns. It is a city of regular form, with broad canals and wide streets, and the usual red houses with the usual triangular façades. Some large squares are entirely paved with small red and yellow bricks, arranged in symmetrical designs, which from a distance look like a carpet. The streets have two pavements—one of brick for ordinary people, and another of stone, which is on a slightly higher level and is reserved for the inhabitants of each house, on which one must not place foot unless one does not mind being glared at from the window by the falcon eyes of the master of the

house. Many houses are whitewashed only halfway up—I do not know why, perhaps for beauty; many are painted black and seem to be in mourning; others are varnished like carriages from the roof to the pavement. The windows are very low: one may look between the beautiful tulips and hyacinths that adorn the sills into drawing-rooms glittering with mirrors and china, and see families gathered round tables covered with mugs of beer, liqueur-stands, biscuits, and cigar-boxes. One may walk for long distances without meeting any one, which is a strange occurrence in a town of more than ten thousand inhabitants. The few people, men, women, or children, who pass one or stand at the doors, greet strangers courteously. I passed close to a group of college students headed by a professor, who made a sign, upon which they all raised their caps, although I certainly was not dressed in a way to impress them with my importance. The town has no noteworthy monuments excepting the town-hall, a building of the seventeenth century, partly Gothic and partly of no school, which in miniature resembles the municipal palace of Brussels, and the large church of St. Lawrence, which belongs to the same period, in which is the tomb of Count Florentius V. of Holland, and a facsimile of Ruyter's flagship hanging like a lustre over the choir. To the east of the city is a dense wood which serves as a public walk, where on holidays the trotting races, or *harddraverij*, take place

with the genuinely Dutch prize of a silver coffee-pot. Notwithstanding the fine wood, the church, the town-hall, and its eleven thousand inhabitants, Alkmaar seems to be only a huge village, and such a profound silence reigns in its streets that the music of the steeples, which is even stranger than that in the other towns, is heard all over the city as loud and clear as though it were the dead of the night.

Passing along the lonely streets toward the centre of the town, I began to see more people, most of whom were women, and, as it was a holiday, they were all tricked out in gold and finery, particularly the peasants. To tell the truth, I do not know what Napoleon could have had in his eyes the day he arrived at Alkmaar. Certainly one sees there some pretty nun-like faces which express perfect innocence, and, above all, little cheeks colored the prettiest rosy hue that modesty ever painted on the face of a virgin. But the effect of this simple grace is utterly destroyed by the atrocious head-dress and the still more atrocious costume. Besides the cluster of curls, the ear-rings like horses' blinkers, the slabs that cross the forehead, and the white cap that conceals the ears and nape of the neck, they wear on their heads, or rather on the crown of their heads, a large cylindrical straw hat with a wide brim trimmed with green, yellow, or other colored silk, narrow behind and turned up in front, so that between the brim and the forehead there is a wide empty space, like that in

one of those huge ugly mouths that the Chinese soldiers used to put on in past times to frighten their enemies. Besides this, their hips are extremely high, but whether they are made so by petticoats or in some other way I do not know, and their figures are enormous at the waist and decrease toward the arm-pits, just the reverse of our women, who delight in a broad chest and a small waist. And, if this were not enough, they compress their chests to such an extent (for I cannot believe that Nature has been so niggardly to them all) that not a sign of a curve appears, as if they consider that to be a shameful monster or a ridiculous defect which women of other countries think the greatest beauty. Consequently, it is no wonder that bundled up, compressed, and wearing such head-dresses, even the prettiest of them scarcely seem to be women. It is therefore easy to imagine how those less favored by nature appear; and at Alkmaar these are in the majority.

Thus reviewing the fair sex, I arrived at a large square full of stalls and people, from which I perceived I had come to Alkmaar on a *kermesse* day.

This is the strangest and most characteristic phase of Dutch life.

The *kermesse* is the Dutch Carnival, with this difference from the Carnival of Italy, that it lasts only eight days and is celebrated at a different time in every village. It is difficult to say of what this festival consists. During *kermesse* in every Dutch

The Town Weighing House, Alkmaar.



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town there springs into being another town, composed of coffee-houses, theatres, shops, booths, and pavilions, which as soon as the holiday meeting ends disappears like an encampment. Everything is packed on the barges and carried to another place. The inhabitants of this wandering town are tradespeople, musicians, comedians, mountebanks, giants, fat women, enormous children, deformed animals, wax figures, wooden horses, automatons, monkeys, trained dogs, and wild beasts. In the midst of the innumerable booths in which this strange population lives there are hundreds of painted, varnished, and gilded cabins, each containing one saloon and four small rooms in the shape of an alcove, in which girls dressed in the Frisian costume with golden head-piece and lace cap serve their customers with special sweetmeats called *broedertijes*, which form the emblematic food of the feast, like the Italian penny buns at Christmas and crumpets at Epiphany. Besides the coffee-houses and the sheds of the fakirs there are bazaars, trained animals, circuses, large theatres in which operas are sung, and every kind of extraordinary spectacle to please the people. Such is the temporary town in which the *kermesse* is celebrated, but the actual fête is quite another thing. In those cafés and booths, in the streets and the squares, night and day throughout the *kermesse*, servants and workmen, men and women of the peasantry, all sorts and conditions of the lower classes, drink and tipple, dance, sing, stamp,

embrace, and mingle together with an impetuosity and license beside which the disorder of our Italian Carnival nights is child's play. In those days the Dutch nation throws off its usual character and becomes unrecognizable. Although the people are, as a rule, serious, economical, domestic, and modest, at the time of the *kermesse* they become boisterous, they scoff at decency, pass their nights in debauchery, and spend a month's savings in one day. The servants, who are allowed an extraordinary amount of freedom during these days (if they are not granted it, they take it), are the principal actresses at the feast. Every one of them is accompanied by her fiancé or lover, or by some young man hired for the occasion, the price varying as he wears a high hat or a cap, as he is handsome or ugly, as he is a bumpkin or smart fellow. The peasants come to town or to the village for their share of the *kermesse* on a fixed day, which is called the peasants' day, and they too make no distinction between good and evil. The height of the uproar is reached on Saturday night. Then it is no longer a feast; it is a brawl, a revel, a saturnalia, that has no equal in any other country in Europe. For a long time I would not believe certain Dutchmen who painted the *kermesse* in such horrible colors, and I believed, as other more indulgent persons told me, that those were intolerant and rancorous Puritans. But when I heard the same things confirmed by unprejudiced people,

by eye-witnesses, by Dutchmen, and by foreigners, who said, "I saw it myself from this box or this window," then I too believed in the theatres converted into dens of vice, in chastity forgotten in the streets, in the unbridled license of the crowds, and even in those Dutchmen, who call this feast a national disgrace.

It is only fair and right, however, to say that for some years the *kermesse* has been declining. Public opinion is divided on this point. Some are in favor of it because it delights them either as actors in it or as spectators, and these excuse or deny the disorders and say that the prohibition of the *kermesse* would cause a revolution. Others, who are opposed to it and would like to see it suppressed, encourage with this object the institution of theatres and decent forms of amusement for the people, the lack of which, they assert, is the principal cause of the excesses to which the nation gives way on the one occasion of the *kermesse*. The opinion of this party is gaining ground day by day. In several towns precautions are taken to bridle the bacchanalia; in others it is fixed at what hour at night the shops must close; in others the booths have been removed from the centre of the cities. The municipality of Amsterdam has named a certain number of years after the lapse of which the temporary Sybaris in which the feasts are held shall not be rebuilt. So it is assured that before very long the famous *kermesse* will

be reduced to a merry, temperate Carnival, with great gain to public morals and national dignity.

The *kermesses*, however, are not noisy and scandalous to the same degree in every town. At the Hague, for example, they are much less boisterous than at Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and I imagine (although I did not spend the night there) that at Alkmaar they are more moderate than at the Hague; which, however, does not signify that they are the acme of decency.

The square where I stood was full of many-colored booths, before which clowns dressed in flesh-colored tights and tight-rope walkers in short petticoats danced and played and grew hoarse with calling the people. In front of every booth there was a crowd of curious folk, from which now and then two or three peasants detached themselves to enter and see the performance. I do not remember ever having seen such simple, mild, and easily-amused people. Between the songs a boy ten years of age, dressed like a clown, would stand up on a sort of stage near the door, and of himself would be able to hold a crowd of two hundred people in front of the booth and make them roar with laughter. How? Not by telling funny stories like the Parisian clowns, not by jumping and making grimaces; nothing of the sort: he simply now and then, with the utmost composure, made a paper arrow and threw it into the crowd, accompanying the act by a slight smile. This suf-

ficed to send these good people into raptures. As I made the circuit of the booths I met some country-women who were rather tipsy; I heard a girl who was unsteady on her legs sing in falsetto; I saw some loving couples who were very demonstrative, some groups of women preparing for the night's brawl by butting against each other with shoulder and hip, so that they staggered; but I saw nothing criminal. It was really, as Alphonse Esquiros says, a Babel of people who did not know what to do with themselves. But as I considered Esquiros's judgment only applied to the day, and foresaw that toward evening a much more dramatic spectacle would begin, and did not wish to find myself alone at night in the midst of the rioting of an unknown country, I decided to start immediately for the Helder, and took the shortest road to the hotel.

When I first entered the hotel I had not spoken to any one, as the porter who accompanied me had asked for my room and had carried up my bag; consequently, I thought that the hotel-keeper or at least some of the waiters understood French. When I returned both waiters and landlord had probably gone to drink in some booth, and in the hotel there was only an old servant, who took me into a room on the first floor, and, making me comprehend that she did not understand me, left me and went about her business. In the room was a table surrounded by fat inhabitants of Alkmaar, who had just finished a

tremendous dinner, and, enveloped in clouds of smoke, were digesting their food, chattering and laughing all the while in the liveliest manner. Seeing me quite alone and immovable in a corner, every now and then they cast a pitying glance at me, and one or two whispered some words to their neighbors which I imagined expressed the same sentiment as their looks. There is nothing more disconcerting to a stranger who is already uncomfortable than to see that he is regarded as an object of pity by a company of merry natives. I can imagine what a forlorn appearance I must have presented at that moment. After some moments one of the fat citizens arose, took his hat, and prepared to go out. When he approached me he stopped and said with a pitifully courteous smile, accentuating every syllable: "*Alkmaar . . . pas de plaisir; Paris . . . toujours plaisir.*" He had taken me for a Frenchman. Having said this, he put on his hat, and, thinking he had consoled me sufficiently, he turned his back and walked solemnly out of the room. He was the only one of the company who knew a word of French. I felt a lively feeling of gratitude to him, and than relapsed into my former gloomy state. Another quarter of an hour passed, and at last a waiter came in. I breathed afresh, ran to him, and told him I wanted to go away. Oh, what a delusion! He did not understand a syllable. I took him by one arm, led him to my room, pointed to my valise, and signed to him that I wished

to depart. It is easy to say, "I wish to leave," but how? By boat? by rail? by *trekschuit?* He answered that he had not understood. I tried to make him understand that I wanted a carriage. He understood, and replied by signs that there were no carriages. Well, I will search for the railway-station myself, thought I, and by gestures I demanded a porter. He retorted there were no porters. I asked, with my watch in my hand, at what hour the master would return. He answered that he would not return at all. I signed to him to carry my bag himself. He responded that he could not. I then begged him with a desperate gesture to tell me what I was to do. He did not answer, but stood looking at me in silence. On such occasions I sadly lose my patience, my courage, and my head. I began again to speak, in a confused mixture of German, French, and Italian, opening and shutting my guide, tracing and crossing out on my copy-book lines and twirls that were meant to represent ships and engines; I tore up and down the room like a maniac, until the poor young man, whether bored or terrified I do not know, slipped out of the door and left me in the lurch. Then I seized my portmanteau and ran down stairs. The jovial citizens of the table, warned by the waiter of my strange agitation, had left the room, and seeing me coming down had stopped in the vestibule, staring at me as at a lunatic who had escaped from an asylum. I flushed fiery red, which increased their surprise.

When I reached the entrance I let my heavy portmanteau fall and stood motionless, looking at the toes of my spectators' boots. They all stared at me in silence. I was more dejected than I had ever been in all my life. Why, I do not know. I only know that there was a mist before my eyes and that I would have given a year of my life to disappear like a flash of lightning. I cursed travelling, Alkmaar, the Dutch language, my stupidity, and I thought of my home as if I were a fugitive abandoned by God and man.

Suddenly a boy appeared, whence I do not know, took my portmanteau, and started rapidly away, signing to me to follow. I followed him without demur, crossed a street, passed through a gate and a courtyard, and arrived at another gate which opened into another street, where the boy stopped, threw down the portmanteau, took his tip, and went away without answering my questions.

Where had he taken me? What was I to do? How long was I to stay there? What was going to happen? All was a mystery. It was growing dark. Men and women from the country passed down the street, groups of boys singing, amorous couples whispering gayly and merrily in each other's ears, and all as they passed me solitary and gloomy turned upon me a glance of surprise and pity. Was I in a pillory? Had the boy brought me here with that design? At first a suspicion of this flashed across

my mind, and then it seemed to me this must be the case. The blood rushed to my head, my heart beat rapidly, and I seized my portmanteau, determined to return to the hotel and revenge myself at any cost. . . . At that moment I spied a diligence and felt a ray of hope. The diligence stopped in front of the gate; a boy standing on the mounting-block made a sign to me. I ran to him and asked anxiously, "Does this go to the railway-station?"—"Yes, sir," he answered readily in French. "Bound for the Helder?"—"Ah! Heaven bless you, boy dear to my heart!" I cried as I jumped in and clapped a florin into his hand; "you have restored me to life!" The diligence took me to the station, and in a few minutes I was on my way to the Helder.

Those who have never travelled will laugh at this adventure, and may say it is an exaggeration or a fable, but those who have had experience in travelling will remember being in such plights, and having the same feelings and losing their heads in the same way, and perhaps recounting their adventures in similar words.

THE HELDER

THE HELDER.

THE definition given of Holland, that it is "a transition between land and sea," is more appropriate to the land lying between Alkmaar and the Helder than to any other part of the country. It is true that one goes by land from the one city to the other, but the land is so threatened, broken, and submerged by the sea that, on looking from the railway-carriage, one forgets little by little that one is in a train, and seems to be on the deck of a ship. Not far from Alkmaar, between the two villages of Kamp and Petten, toward the North Sea, there is a long stretch of land which is believed to have been one of the mouths of the Rhine, where the chain of the downs is interrupted and the coast is lashed so furiously by the sea that, notwithstanding the strong works of defence, the waters continually gnaw into the heart of the country. A little farther on is a large inundated polder across which the great Northern Canal passes. Beyond the polder, round the village of Zand, there is a wide barren plain, a mass of thickets and marshes, with here and there a few peasants' huts covered with cone-shaped roofs that

from a distance look like graves. Beyond the village of Zand is an immense polder called Anna Paulowna, in honor of the wife of William II. of Orange, grand-duchess of Russia, which was drained between 1847 and 1850. Beyond the polder spread vast plains, covered with underbrush and swamps, extending as far as the last extremity of North Holland, where stands the young and lonely town of the Helder, the dead sentinel of the Netherlands, veiled by mist and lashed by waves.

The Helder has this peculiarity, that when one is in the city one looks for it and cannot find it. It may be said to consist of one very long street flanked by two rows of small red houses and protected by a gigantic dyke, which forms a sort of artificial beach on the North Sea. This dyke, which is one of the most marvellous works of modern times, extends almost ten kilometres from Nieuwediep, which is the entrance of the great Northern Canal, as far as the fort of the Hereditary Prince, which is at the opposite end of the city. It is entirely built of enormous blocks of Norwegian granite and limestone from Belgium, and has a beautiful carriage-road running along the top. The dyke descends into the sea at an angle of forty degrees to the depth of sixty metres. At different points it is fortified by lesser dykes, composed of piles, fagots, and earth, which project two hundred metres into the sea. The highest tides never wet its summit, and the unwearied waves

dash in vain against that ruthless bulwark which rises before them in a threatening rather than a defensive attitude, as if it were a challenge of human patience to the fury of the elements.

The Nieuwediep, which opens at one extremity of the Helder, is an artificial port, provided with large quays and dykes, which protect the ships that enter the Northern Canal. The gates of the harbor, called fan-doors, the largest in Holland, shut automatically with the pressure of the water. In this port are anchored a large number of ships, many of which come from England and Sweden, and the greater part of the Dutch war fleet, composed of frigates and small vessels, which are cleaner even than the clean houses of Broek. On the left side of Nieuwediep is a great marine arsenal where a rear-admiral resides.

At the end of the last century almost nothing of the city existed. The Helder was then nothing but a fishing-village, scarcely marked on the map. The opening of the great Northern Canal and a short trip taken by Napoleon I. in a fishing-boat from the Helder to the island of Texel, which may be seen distinctly from the top of the dyke, transformed the village into a city. Observing the body of water compressed between Texel and the bank of Holland, Napoleon conceived the idea of making the Helder "the Gibraltar of the North," and commenced the work by ordering the construction of two forts, one

of which was called Lasalle, and is now named the Hereditary Prince, and the other the King of Rome, now called Admiral Dirk. Circumstances prevented him from completing his great design, but the work, which he rapidly began, was slowly continued by the Dutch, so that the Helder is now the best fortified city in the kingdom and capable of containing thirty thousand defenders, ready to stop the entrance of a fleet into the Northern Canal and the Zuyder Zee Gulf; moreover, it is protected at a great distance by a bulwark of rocks and sandbanks, so constructed as to be able in extreme cases to inundate all the province behind.

But apart from its strategic importance, the Helder deserves a visit for its amphibious nature, which always raises in the mind of a stranger a doubt whether he is on a continent or on a group of rocks and islands a thousand miles away from the European coast. Whichever road one takes, the sea is always visible. The city is crossed and surrounded by canals as large as rivers, which the inhabitants cross in barges. Behind the largest dyke is a vast extent of stagnant water which rises and falls with the tide, as if it were in communication with the sea by some subterranean passage. In every direction there is running water, imprisoned, it is true, between the two banks, but swollen and threatening, and seeming merely to be waiting the first occasion to r[illegible] its terrible freedom. The ground around the t[illegible]

bare and desolate, and the sky, which is almost always cloudy, is crossed by flights of sea-birds. The town itself, formed of a single row of houses, seems to be conscious of its dangerous position and to expect a catastrophe from one hour to another. When the wind blows and the sea roars one would think that every good citizen could not do better than shut himself up within doors, say his prayers, put his head under the sheets, and await God's will.

The population, consisting of eighteen thousand people, is as singular as the town. It is a mixture of trades-people, government employés, naval officers, soldiers, fishermen, people who have arrived from India, and others who are preparing to depart thither, and relatives of both who have gathered to give the first embrace or last farewell, for this is the extreme corner of Dutchland, which the sailor salutes on his outbound voyage and sights on his return. The town is so long and narrow that few people are seen, and no sound is heard save the melancholy drawling songs of the sailors, which sadden the heart like the far-off cry of shipwrecked men.

Although it is a very young town, the Helder is as rich in historical records as every other Dutch city. It saw the Grand Pensionary de Witt cross for the first time the strait of Texel in a small boat, calculating himself the depth of the water, and demonstrating to the pilots and Dutch captains, who would not risk it, the possibility of the passage of the Dutch fleet sent

to fight England. In those waters Admirals de Ruyter and Tromp withstood the united French and English fleets. A short distance away, in 1799, in the polder called Qypt, the English general Abercrombie repulsed the assault of the French and Batavian armies commanded by General Brome. And, finally, since it seems a law of nature that every Dutch town must witness something strange and incredible, the Helder witnessed a sort of amphibious battle between land and sea for which a name is lacking in military language. In 1795 the cavalry and light artillery, headed by General Pichegru, rushed across the frozen gulf of the Zuyder Zee at a gallop, and dashed against the Dutch fleet imprisoned in the ice near the island of Texel, surrounded it like a fortress, demanded its surrender, and took it prisoner.

This island of Helder, which, as I said, may be seen distinctly from the top of the dyke of the Helder, is the first of a chain of islands extending in the shape of a bow in front of the whole aperture of the Zuyder Zee as far as the province of Groningen, and is believed to have formed, before the existence of the great gulf, an unbroken coast which served as a bulwark to the Netherlands. This island of Texel, which does not contain more than six thousand inhabitants, who are scattered in several villages and in one small town, has a bay in which men-of-war and the ships belonging to the East Indian Company can ride at anchor. At the end of the sixteenth

Behind the Dyke, The Helder.



century the ships of Heemskerk and Barendz left this bay for the memorable voyage which furnished the writer Tollens with a theme for his beautiful poem, "The Winter of the Hollanders at Nova Zembla."

Here, in brief, is the sad and solemn story, as told by Van Kampen and sung by Tollens:

At the end of the sixteenth century the Dutch, not being able to contend hand to hand with the Spanish and Portuguese for the possession of the Indian commerce, thought of forcing a new way across the Arctic seas, by which they might reach the ports of Eastern Asia and China in a shorter time. A company of merchants entrusted the adventurous enterprise to the hands of an expert sailor called Barendz, who with two ships sailed from the island of Texel on the 6th of June, 1594, for the North Pole. The ship which he commanded arrived at the most northern point in Nova Zembla and returned to Holland; the other ship took the more familiar way by the straits of Vaigat, crossed the ice in the bay of Kara, and arrived at an open blue sea, from which they could see the Russian coast toward the south-east. The direction of this coast made them think that the ship had passed Cape Tabis, which Pliny, who was then the uncontested authority, had designated as the most northern point of Asia, and therefore they thought that they could sail quickly to the eastern and southern ports of the continent, for they did not know

that, beyond the Gulf of Obi, Asia extends within the Arctic Pole for another one hundred and twenty degrees toward the east. Consequently, the news of this discovery, when it was announced in Holland, was hailed with the greatest joy. Six large ships were at once prepared and loaded with merchandise to be sold to the people of India, and a little ship was despatched to accompany the squadron until it had passed the supposed Cape Tabis, when it was to return with the news. The squadron departed. This time, however, the voyage did not reach their expectations. The ships found the straits of Vaigat all blocked with ice, and, after having in vain tried to force a passage, they returned to their country.

After this failure the States General, although they promised a prize of twenty-five thousand florins to any one who succeeded in the enterprise, refused to join in defraying the expenses of a new voyage. Still, the citizens were not discouraged. Amsterdam chartered two ships, enlisted some brave sailors, nearly all of whom were unmarried, so that the thought of their families should not weaken their courage in the midst of peril, and gave the command of the expedition to the courageous Captain Heemskerk. The two ships departed on the 15th of May, 1596. On one was the master pilot Barendz; Van de Ryp was captain of the other. At first they did not agree on which direction to take, but finally Barendz was persuaded by Van de Ryp to sail toward the

north instead of to the north-east. They arrived at the 74th degree of northern latitude, near a little island which they named the island of the Bears, in memory of a fight of several hours' duration which they fought against a number of these animals. Nothing was to be seen around them but very high steep crags, which seemed to enclose the sea on every side. They continued to sail toward the north. On the 19th of June they discovered a country which they named Spitzbergen because of its pointed rocks; they believed it was Greenland, and there they saw large white bears, deer, reindeer, wild geese, enormous whales, and different-colored foxes. But when they had reached the 76th and 80th degrees of northern latitude they were obliged to turn southward, and landed again on the island of the Bears. Barendz, however, would no longer follow the northern direction that Ryp up to the present had taken, and turned south-east, while Ryp sailed toward the north, and so they separated.

Barendz arrived on the 17th of July near Nova Zembla, coasted along the northern shore of the island, and continued to sail toward the south. Then their sufferings began. As they proceeded the enormous blocks of ice floating on the sea grew more frequent; they were united into vast layers, and were heaped up until they formed crags and high, steep mountains of ice, so that soon the ship found itself in the midst of a real continent of ice which

hid the horizon on every side. Seeing that it was impossible to reach the eastern coast of Asia, the voyagers thought of turning back, but it was already the 25th of August, at which time the summer in those regions is coming to an end, and they soon perceived that return was no longer possible. They found themselves imprisoned in the ice, lost in a frightful solitude, wrapped in a fearful mist, without a goal, without hope, and likely to be buried at any moment by the icebergs which were floating and dashing against each other with great fury around the vessel. One way only remained open to them to save their lives, or rather one means of delaying death. They were near the coast of Nova Zembla, and could abandon the ship and pass the winter on that deserted island. It was a desperate resolution, which required as much courage as to remain on board, but at least it meant movement, struggle, a new kind of danger. After some hesitation they left the ship and landed on the island.

The island was uninhabited; no northern people had ever set foot on it; it was a desert of ice and snow, scourged by waves and wind, on which the sun rarely cast a fugitive and chilly ray. But, nevertheless, the poor shipwrecked men burst into shouts of joy when they put their feet on the land, and knelt down in the snow to thank Providence. They were obliged at once to plan for the construction of a hut. There was not a tree on the island, but, luckily, they

found a great deal of driftwood which the sea had brought from the continent. They set to work, returned to their ship and brought away boards, beams, nails, tar, packing-cases, and barrels. They planted the beams in the ice and made a roof of the deck; they swung their hammocks from the ceiling, covered the walls with sails, and stopped the cracks with pitch. But while they were working they were in great danger and suffered unheard-of agonies. The cold was so intense that if they put a nail between their lips it froze directly, and they tore their flesh and filled their mouths with blood in removing it. The polar bears, furious with hunger, assailed them ferociously among the blocks of ice; they prowled round their huts, and even followed them into the inner part of the ship, and compelled them to stop their labor to defend their lives. The ground was frozen so hard that it had to be quarried like stone. Round the ship the water was frozen to the depth of three and a half fathoms. The beer in the barrels was turned to stone and lost all taste, and the cold was increasing day by day. At last they succeeded in making their hut habitable, and were sheltered from the snow and wind. Then they lighted a fire, and would sleep for some hours when they were not forced to keep awake by the cries of the wild beasts that prowled round the hut. They trimmed their lamps with the fat of the bears they killed through the cracks of the walls, and warmed their hands

in the bleeding entrails, dressed themselves in the skins, and ate foxes' flesh and the herrings and biscuits that were left from the stores for their voyage. Meanwhile the cold increased so that even the bears left their dens no longer. Food and drink froze even when placed near the fire. The poor sailors burnt their hands and feet without feeling the least warmth. One evening, when they had hermetically shut the hut for fear of being frozen, they almost died of suffocation, and were again obliged to face the deadly cold.

To all these calamities was added yet another. On the fourth of November they looked in vain for the sunrise; the sun appeared no more, the polar night had begun. Then these men of iron felt their courage give way, and Barendz was forced to hide his own anguish and use all his eloquence to persuade them not to abandon themselves to despair. Nourishment and fuel began to grow scarce; the branches of pine they had found on the shore were thrown on the fire almost with regret; the lamp was fed with so little oil that the darkness was scarcely broken. But, in spite of all this, in the evening, when they rested from the fatigues of the day round their little hearth, they had some moments of merriment. On the king's birthday they proposed a little banquet with wine and flour paste fried in whale oil, and drew lots who was to have the crown of Nova Zembla. At other times they played games, told old

stories, drank to the glory of Maurice of Orange, and talked of their families. Every day they sang psalms together, kneeling on the ice, with their faces turned toward the stars. Sometimes an aurora borealis tore asunder the fearful darkness in which they were wrapped, and then they sallied forth from their hut, running along the banks, saluting that fugitive light with tender gratitude as if it were a promise of salvation.

According to their calculations, the sun would reappear on the 9th of February, 1597. They were mistaken: on the morning of the 24th of January, at a time when they were especially disheartened and sad, one of them on awakening saw an extraordinary light, gave a cry, jumped to his feet, and awoke his companions. They all rushed out of the hut and beheld the eastern sky illuminated by a bright light; the pale moon, the clear air, the summit of the rocks, and the mountains of ice were all rose-color; in short, it was the dawn, the sun, life, the blessing of God, and the hope of once more seeing their native country after three months of night and torture. For some moments they remained motionless and silent, as if overcome by emotion; then they burst into tears, embraced each other, waved their ragged caps, and made the horrible solitude resound with words of prayer and cries of joy. But it was a short-lived joy; they looked into each other's faces and were filled with fear and pity. Cold, sleepless-

ness, hunger, anxiety, had consumed and transformed them until they were no longer recognizable. Nor were their sufferings ended. In that same month the snow fell to such a depth that the hut was almost buried, and they were obliged to go in and out by the chimney. As the cold diminished the bears reappeared, and the danger, the sleepless nights, and the ferocious battles began again, so that their strength decreased and their courage, which had been reanimated, fell.

They had one thread of hope. They had not been able to free their vessel from the ice, and even if they had been successful in the attempt, they could never have repaired it so as to make it serviceable; but they had dragged a boat and a shallop to the shore, and little by little, always defending themselves against the bears, which rushed up even to the door-step of their hut, they had mended them as best they could. With two little boats they hoped to reach one of the small ports of Northern Russia, and, sailing down the northern coast of Nova Zembla and Siberia, to cross the White Sea, a journey of at least four hundred German miles. During the month of March the changeable weather kept them in continual alternations of hope and fear. More than ten times they saw the sea clear of ice to the coast and prepared to leave, and then each time a sudden fall of temperature heaped ice upon ice and shut the way on every side. In the month of April the ice was thick and

unbroken; in May the weather was changeable. During the month of June they definitely resolved to leave. After they had written out a minute account of all their adventures, a copy of which they left in the hut, on the 14th of June, after nine months' sojourn in that accursed land, they sailed toward the continent. The weather was beautiful and the sea open on every side. On those two open boats, although reduced by so much suffering, they challenged the furious winds, the rain, the deadly cold, and the moving ice-blocks of that vast, terrible ocean, in which it would have seemed a dreadful enterprise to venture with a fleet. For a long time during the voyage they had to repulse the attacks of the polar bears, to suffer hunger, and nourish themselves with the birds which they killed with stones, and with the eggs found on the deserted coasts. Yet they held on their way between hope and despair, rejoicing and weeping, sometimes regretting that they had abandoned Nova Zembla, invoking the tempest, and desiring death. Often they were obliged to drag their boats over fields of ice—to tie them down to keep them from being blown out to sea: they would gather together in a group in the midst of the snow to better resist the cold; they would grope after each other in the thick fog, call to each other, hold together so as not to be lost, and to keep up their courage. But they did not all resist these horrible trials; some died. Barendz himself, who was feeble when he embarked,

after a few days felt that his end was near, and told his companions so. However, he did not cease for a moment to direct the navigation and to make every effort to shorten for his poor companions the tremendous journey whose goal he knew he could not reach. His life went out as he was examining a map; his arm fell frozen in the act of pointing out the far-off land, and his last words were words of advice and encouragement. At last, in St. Lawrence's Bay, they met a Russian boat which gave them some provisions and wine, and spoonwort, a remedy for scurvy —from which several of the sailors were suffering— which cured them immediately. At the entrance of the White Sea a thick fog separated the two boats, which, however, both rounded the cape Kaniniska safely, and, favored by the wind, in thirty hours covered a space of a hundred and twenty miles, after which they met again with cries of joy. But a much greater pleasure awaited them at Kilduin. There they found a letter from Ryp, who was in command of the other ship which had left the island of Texel, announcing his safe arrival. After a short time the boat and the shallop rejoined the ship at Kola. It was the first time the shipwrecked sailors of Nova Zembla had seen the flag of their own country since they left the island of Bears, and they saluted it with a delirium of joy. The two crews threw themselves into each other's arms, recounted their various vicissitudes, wept over lost friends, forgot

Archway of Monks' Gate, Kampen.



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what they had suffered, and sailed together for Holland, where they arrived safe and sound on the 29th of October, 1597, three months after their departure from the hut. So ended the last enterprise conducted by the Dutch to open a new commercial way to India across the Arctic Sea. Almost three centuries later, in 1870, the captain of a Swedish vessel, which was driven by a tempest upon the coast of Nova Zembla, found the wreck of their ship and a hut containing two kettles, a clock, a gun-barrel, a sword, a hatchet, a flute, a Bible, and some cases full of tools and tatters of mouldy clothing. They were the last relics of Barendz and Heemskerk's sailors, and were carried in triumph to the Hague and exhibited in the Marine Museum as sacred relics.

In the evening, as I stood on the summit of the great dyke of the Helder in the light of the moon, which would hide suddenly behind the clouds and then as suddenly reappear in its splendor, all these images crowded into my mind, and I could not refrain from looking at the island of Texel and the great North Sea, which has no boundary except the eternal ice of the poles—the sea that the ancients thought was the end of the universe, *illum usque tantum natura*, as Tacitus said,—the sea upon which, during the great tempests, appeared the gigantic forms of the Germanic divinities; and as I gazed out over that vast, gloomy waste, the only way by which I could

express my mysterious fear was by exclaiming softly now and again, "Barendz! Barendz!" listening to the sound of the name as if the wind brought it from an interminable distance.

THE ZUYDER ZEE.

THE ZUYDER ZEE.

I HAD not yet visited ancient Frisia, the unsubdued rebel of Rome, the land of pretty women, large horses, and invincible skaters, the most poetical province of the Netherlands, and on my way thither I was able to satisfy another ardent desire, that of crossing the Zuyder Zee, the latest born of all the seas.

Six hundred years ago this great basin of the North Sea, which touches five provinces and covers more than seven hundred square kilometres, did not exist. North Holland was connected with Friesland, and where the gulf now extends there was a vast region dotted with fresh-water lakes, the largest of which, the Flevo, mentioned by Tacitus, was separated from the sea by a fertile, populated isthmus. It is not certain whether the sea of its own strength broke through the natural barriers of these regions, or whether the sinking of the soil of this part of Holland gave free course to the invader. The great transformation was accomplished at different times during the thirteenth century. In 1205, Wieringen, at the extremity of North Holland, was still joined to the continent; in 1251 it became an island. In

subsequent invasions the sea submerged the isthmus that separated its waters from the lake of Flevo in a number of places, and finally, in the year 1282, it opened a gap across this shattered bulwark, rushed in upon the lakes, overflowed the land, and little by little, becoming wider and continuing its inroads, it formed that great gulf which is now called the Zuyder Zee, or the South Sea, which, with the arm called the Y, extends as far as Beverwyk and Haarlem. Many confused stories are related of the formation of this gulf—tales of ruined cities and drowned communities; and when the one story ends another begins, of young towns which arose on the new banks, flourished and grew famous, and in turn declined, and are now reduced to small villages with grassy roads and ports choked with sand. Records of overwhelming misfortunes, fabulous traditions, fantastic terrors, quaint and antiquated manners and customs, are to be found on the waters and along the banks of this unique sea, which appeared a short time ago and is already strewn with ruins and condemned to disappear. A month's journey would not suffice to observe and collect all that is to be seen and heard there, yet the mere idea of seeing these tottering towns, mysterious islands, and fatal sandbanks even from a distance attracted me irresistibly.

On a beautiful day near the end of February I left Amsterdam on one of the steamers that go to Harlingen. I knew that I should never again see the

capital of Holland. Leaning over the rail of the prow while the vessel glided from the port, I contemplated the great city for the last time, striving to stamp its fantastic appearance indelibly upon my memory. In a few moments I could see nothing but the black indented outline of its houses, over which the cupola of the royal palace and a forest of gleaming steeples arose. Then the city sank, the steeples hid themselves one after the other, and finally the highest pinnacle of the cathedral looked down for some moments on the general fall, and then it too disappeared in the sea, and Amsterdam became a memory.

The ship passed between the gigantic dykes that close the gulf of the Y, and, rapidly crossing the Pampus, the great sandbank which almost ruined the commerce of Amsterdam, entered the Zuyder Zee.

The banks of this gulf are all meadows, gardens, and villages, which in the summer form an enchanting landscape, but viewed from a ship in the month of February seem to be only narrow strips of dull green separating sea from sky. The shore of North Holland is very beautiful, and along this the vessel coasted.

As soon as we crossed the Pampus we turned to the left and passed close to the island of Marken.

Marken is as famous among the islands of the Zuyder Zee as is Broek among the villages of North Holland, but in spite of its renown and the fact that

it is only an hour's journey by boat from the coast, few strangers and very few Hollanders ever visit it. This the captain told me as he pointed out the light-house of the little island, and he added that he thought the reason of it is that any stranger who arrives at Marken, even if he be a Dutchman, is followed about by the boys, observed and discussed by every one as if he were a man fallen from the moon. The description of the island explains this curiosity. It is a strip of land one thousand metres wide and three thousand long, which was separated from the continent in the thirteenth century, and in the customs, manners, and life of its inhabitants still remains at the same point where it stood six centuries ago. The level of the island is only a little higher than that of the sea; consequently it is surrounded by a low dyke which is not strong enough to save it from inundation. The houses are built on eight artificial hills and form as many villages, one of which, the one containing the church, is the capital and another the cemetery. When the sea overflows the dykes the valleys between these hillocks are changed into canals, and the inhabitants go from village to village in boats.

The houses are wooden: some are painted, some are smeared with pitch; one only, the clergyman's, is of stone, and before it there is a small garden shaded by four large trees, the only ones on the island. Near this house stands the church, the school, and

the municipal offices. The inhabitants number little more than a thousand, and they all live by fishing. Excepting the doctor, the clergyman, and the schoolmaster, they all were born on the island; none of the natives ever marry on the continent; nobody from the continent comes to live on the island. All profess the Reformed religion, and all know how to read and write. In the school, where there are more than two hundred children of both sexes, history, geography, and arithmetic are taught.

The style of dress, which has remained unchanged for centuries, is the same for all, and is most curious. The men look like soldiers. They wear a jacket of gray cloth, ornamented with two rows of buttons, which are generally medals or antique coins left by father to son. This jacket is like a shirt, buttoned inside of a pair of breeches of the same color, which are very wide round the thighs and tight round the leg, and leave almost all the calf bare. A felt hat or a fur cap, according to the season, a red cravat, black stockings, white wooden clogs or shoes something like slippers, complete this strange costume.

But the dress of the women is even more outlandish. On their heads they wear an enormous white cap in the shape of a mitre, all trimmed with lace and embroidery and tied under the chin like a helmet. From under this cap, which completely covers the ears, emerge two long plaits of hair, which swing about on their bosoms, and in front a heavy

bang projects which is cut in a straight line over their eyebrows and entirely hides their foreheads. Their dress consists of a sleeveless bodice and a petticoat of two colors. The bodice is deep red, covered with many-colored embroideries which cost years of work; hence they descend as heirlooms, from mother to daughter for several generations. The upper part of the skirt is gray or blue striped with black, and the lower part is dark brown. Their arms are covered almost to the elbow with the sleeves of a white chemisette striped with red. The children are dressed almost alike; the dress of the girls differs slightly from that of the women; and on feast-days every one dresses more luxuriously than on work-days.

Such is their costume, a mixture of the Oriental, the warlike, and the sacred, and the life of the inhabitants is as strange as their dress. The men are extraordinarily temperate and live to an advanced age. Every Sunday night they set sail from the island in their boats, pass the week fishing in the Zuyder Zee, and return home on Saturday. The women bring up the children, cultivate the land, and make clothes for the entire family. Like the rest of the Dutch women, they love cleanliness and ornaments, and even in their huts white curtains, glass decorations, embroidered bed-covers, looking-glasses, and flowers are seen. The greater part of the inhabitants die without seeing any other place than their little island. They are poor,

but, knowing no state in life better than their own, and having no wants or desires that they cannot satisfy, they are unconscious of their poverty. Among them there are no changes of fortune nor distinctions of class. All work, no one serves. The only events which vary the monotony of their lives are births, marriages, deaths, a successful week's fishing, the arrival of a stranger, a passing ship, or a storm at sea. They pray, love, and fish; such is their life, and so generation succeeds generation and preserves the innocence of their habits and their ignorance of the world unchanged as if it were a holy inheritance.

Beyond the island of Marken one may see on the coast of North Holland a steeple, a group of houses, and some sails. This is Monnikendam, a village of three thousand inhabitants. In former times it was a flourishing town, and, together with Hoorn and Enkhuizen, conquered and made a prisoner of the Spanish admiral Bossu, for which it received as a trophy his collar of the Golden Fleece, and the other two cities took his sword and drinking-cup. After Monnikendam the village of Volendam appears, and beyond Volendam the small town of Edam, which has bequeathed its name to that cheese with a red rind—*fama super etera notus.*

A curious legend refers to this town, and is represented by an old bas-relief which still remains over the door of one of its houses. Several centuries ago

some Edam girls who were walking on the shore saw a woman of strange appearance swimming in the sea, who every now and then stopped to look at them with an air of curiosity. They called to her, and she came nearer; they signed to her to come out of the water, and she stepped on shore. She was very beautiful as she stood before them naked, but covered with mud and water-weeds, which had grown upon her skin like moss on the bark of trees. Some believe she had a fish's tail, but a serious Dutch chronicler, who affirmed that he had heard the story from an eye-witness, says she had legs like other women. They questioned her, but she did not understand, and answered in a sweet voice in an unknown tongue. They took her home, scraped the weeds from her limbs, dressed her as a Dutch woman, and taught her to spin. It is not known how long she remained in this new state, but tradition recounts that, although cleansed and dressed, she felt drawn to the sea by an irresistible longing, and after in vain attempting several times to return to her native element, for she was guarded by a hundred eyes, she one day succeeded at last, and no one heard anything more of her. Whence had she come? Whither had she gone? Who was she? Who knows? The fact remains that all along the coast of the Zuyder Zee the simple folk still speak of the water-woman of Edam, and to affirm, as some one once dared to do in a group of peasants, that this woman must have been

a seal, would give one the name of an insolent person; and I think the peasants are right, for who is entitled to talk of what he does not know? Edam, which was formerly a flourishing city of more than twenty-five thousand inhabitants, has been overtaken by the same fate as the other towns of the Zuyder Zee, and is now only a village.

From Edam to Hoorn the coast is almost invisible, so I turned all my attention to the sea. On the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee one may observe the marvellous mobility of the Dutch sky as if it were reflected in an immense mirror. The Zuyder Zee is the youngest sea in Europe, and its appearance presents all the caprices, the restlessness, the unexpected and inexplicable variations of youth. On that day, as usual, the sky was overcast with clouds, which divided and reunited continually, so that in one hour there followed each other all manner of changes of light, such as in our country would rarely be seen in the same day. At one moment the sea would grow black as pitch, with white luminous lines in the distance like currents of quicksilver. Suddenly the black would disappear, and the gulf become flecked with wide stretches of deep green, as if covered with grass, and in the blue track of the ship one seemed to see Dutch meadows and canals which had become detached from the continent and were gliding along the water. In a moment all that beautiful green would change into a muddy yellow, which gave the gulf the appearance

of a thick dirty marsh in which grotesque and filthy animals might swim. One moment the steeples and windmills on the coast would be barely visible, like distant shadows, through the mist, and one would imagine that a dark and rainy night was drawing on. The next moment the windmills, steeples, and houses seemed to be just at hand, and shone in the light of the sun as though they were gilded. Beside the ship, in the distance, along the coast, on the waters of the gulf, there was a continual flashing and fading of shadows, lights, colors—an interchange of nocturnal darkness and noontime light, threatenings of tempests and smiling weather, and one almost began to believe that there was some mysterious reason for all those changes, some significance beyond human comprehension, which invisible spectators above could alone explain. Here and there appeared boats with black sails which seemed to have been draped in mourning to carry the dead.

The ship passed within sight of the town of Hoorn, the former capital of North Holland, where in 1416 the first great net was made for the herring fishery, and where was born that daring Schouten who was the first to pass the most southerly point of America. Thence we directed our course toward Enkhuizen. On that part of the coast which lies between the two towns extends a chain of villages composed of wooden and brick houses with varnished roofs and carved doors, in front of which stand trees with painted

St. Jans Gasthius, Hoorn.



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trunks. From the ship one sees nothing but the roofs of all these villages, which seem to emerge from the water or to be so many floating prisms. The red of the roofs, the tip of some steeple, the arms of a windmill are the only colors and forms which occasionally vary the equal and tranquil line of the coast, which is like the outline of an infinitely thin isthmus. Shortly before arriving at Enkhuizen one sees the little island of Urk, which is believed to have formerly been connected with Schokland, an island lying close to the mouth of the Yssel. Urk is still inhabited. It is the favorite island of the seals, who waken the inhabitants at night by their snoring. Schokland was deserted a few years ago by the islanders, who were no longer able to fight against the sea.

The steamer stopped at Enkhuizen.

Enkhuizen is the deadest of all the dead cities on the Zuyder Zee. In the sixteenth century it contained forty thousand inhabitants, sent a hundred and forty boats to the herring fishery, was protected by twenty men of war, had a beautiful port, a large arsenal, and handsome buildings. Now the port is choked with sand, the population is reduced to five thousand, one of its former gates is a quarter of an hour's walk from the first houses of the town, the streets are grass-grown, the houses are abandoned and falling to decay, its inhabitants poor and sickly. No other glory remains to it excepting that of being

the birthplace of Paul Potter. The ship stopped some moments before this phantom city. At the landing there were only a few motionless sailors: the only part of the town visible consisted of some houses half hidden by dykes and a high steeple, which at that moment was playing, with notes as slow as those of a passing bell, the air *O Matilda, t'amo è vero*, from "William Tell." The shore was deserted, the docks were silent, the houses barred, and a large black cloud hovered over the town, like a pall descending slowly and covering for eternity. It was a sight that excited both pity and fear.

On leaving Enkhuizen the vessel in a few moments reached the mouth of the Zuyder Zee, between the town of Stavoren, situated at the extreme end of Friesland, and Medemblick, another ruinous town of North Holland, although at one time, before the foundation of Hoorn and Enkhuizen, it was the capital of the province. At this point the gulf is a little more than half as wide as the straits of Calais. When the gigantic enterprise of draining the Zuyder Zee is carried into effect, this will be the place where the enormous dyke to separate the gulf from the North Sea will be constructed. This dyke will extend from Stavoren to Medemblick, leaving a large canal open in the middle for the tide and the drainage of the waters of the Yssel and the Vecht, and behind them, little by little, the great gulf will be transformed into a fertile plain. North Holland will

be joined to Friesland, all the dead towns of the coast will be reanimated with new life, islands will be destroyed, manners will change, languages be confused—a province, a nation, a world will be created. This great work will cost, according to the calculation of the Dutch, a hundred and twenty-five million francs. They have been preparing for it many years, and perhaps the work will soon begin, but, alas! before it is completed we who have been born toward the middle of the nineteenth century will have folded our arms in the form of the cross, as Praja says, and violets will be growing over our heads.

As soon as we had passed Medemblick the steeples of Stavoren on the opposite bank of the Zuyder Zee came into view. This is the oldest city in Friesland, and etymologists say that its name is derived from the god Stavo, whom the ancient Frisians worshipped. This town is a sad-looking little village surrounded by great ramparts and marshes. Before Amsterdam existed it was a large, flourishing, and populous city in which the kings of Frisia resided, and where was gathered all the merchandise of the East and West, so that it received the glorious name of Nineveh of the Zuyder Zee. A strange legend—which, however, is founded upon a fact, the choking of the port with sand—explains the first cause of its miserable decline.

The inhabitants, who had grown immensely rich from commerce, had become proud, vain, and extrava-

gant, and their reckless luxury had reached such a point that they gilded the balustrades, the bolts and doors, and even the most humble utensils in the house. This displeased the good god, who determined to inflict a serious punishment on the insolent town, and soon found an occasion for doing so. A rich female merchant at Stavoren chartered a ship and sent it to Dantzic to take a cargo of some kind of precious merchandise. The captain of the vessel arrived at Dantzic, but could not find the goods: in order that he might not return with his ship empty, he loaded it with grain. When he entered the port of Stavoren the female merchant was waiting for him, and asked him, "What have you brought?" The captain humbly replied that he had brought only corn. "Corn!" she cried furiously, with an accent of disdain and scorn; "throw it in the sea immediately." The captain obeyed, and the wrath of the god was kindled at the same moment. In the place where the grain fell into the water a large sandbank formed in front of the port, which little by little destroyed the commerce of the town. This sandbank exists in very deed, and is called the Vrouwensand, or the Woman's Sandbank. It is such an impediment that even the smallest merchant vessels are obliged to steer with the greatest caution to avoid running upon it, and not even the great pier that was built to repair the evil changed the destiny of the doomed city.

When our steamer left Stavoren the sun was setting, but, notwithstanding the hour and the season, the weather was so mild that I was able to dine on deck, and, inspired by the grand thought of the drainage of the Zuyder Zee, I drained a bottle of old Bordeaux to the dregs, without once breathing upon my fingers. The travellers were all below, the sea was smooth, the sky was golden, the Bordeaux exquisite, and my heart at peace. Meanwhile before my eyes the coast of Friesland unfolded itself, protected by two rows of palisades, upheld by enormous blocks of granite and basalt from Germany and Norway, which give the country the appearance of a huge intrenched camp.

We passed Hindeloopen, another fallen town, which has only a thousand inhabitants, and preserves the eccentric style of dress which was in vogue several centuries ago; we skirted close to a group of small hidden villages which announced their presence by raising above the dykes the iron fingers of their steeples; and at last we arrived at Harlingen—the second capital of Friesland—to see it still illuminated by the last glow of the sunset.

FRIESLAND.

FRIESLAND.

As the ship neared the landing-place, I remembered what had befallen me at Alkmaar, and, fearing that perhaps I should find myself in the same plight at Harlingen, as I had brought no letters of introduction, I felt anxious. And I had every reason to feel anxious, for the Frisian dialect is a mixture of Dutch, Danish, and Old Saxon. It is almost incomprehensible to the Dutch themselves, and I did not understand a syllable of it; I knew, too, that in Friesland hardly any one speaks French. I therefore prepared myself, with melancholy resignation, to gesticulate, to make myself a laughing-stock, and to be led about like a child, and I began to search among the crowd of porters and boys waiting for the passengers on the shore for the man with the most benevolent face to whom I might entrust my portmanteau and commit my life.

The ship stopped before I found this face, and I landed. While I was hesitating between two sturdy Frieslanders who wished to take possession of me, I heard a word whispered in my ear which made my heart leap. It was my own name. I turned round

as though I had been addressed by a ghost, and saw a young gentleman, who smiled at my astonishment and repeated to me in French, "Are you not Monsieur So-and-so?"—"Yes, I am," I answered, "or at least I believe so, because, to tell you the truth, I am so stupefied at being known by you that I almost doubt my own identity. What miracle is this?" The explanation was very simple. A friend at Amsterdam, who had accompanied me to the port in the morning, had sent a telegram, as soon as the ship departed, to a friend of his at Harlingen, asking him to go to the landing-place and wait for a foreigner who was tall, dark, and wrapped in a strange chocolate-colored overcoat, who would arrive by the evening boat in great need of an interpreter, and who would be delighted to have a companion. As all my fellow-travellers were fair, my friend's friend had easily recognized me, and had come to get me out of my difficulties.

If I had had the collar of the order of the Annunziata in my pocket, I should have put it round his neck, but, as I was without it, I expressed my boundless gratitude to him in a flood of words which greatly surprised him. We then entered the town, where I had intended to remain only a few hours.

Large canals full of ships, wide streets with rows of neat, many-colored little houses on either side, few people to be seen out of their houses, a profound silence, an air of melancholy tranquillity which brings a thousand

vague memories to mind,—such is Harlingen, a town of little more than ten thousand inhabitants, founded near the site of a former village which was destroyed by the sea in 1134. When we had taken a walk around the streets my companion took me to see the dykes, without which the town would have been submerged a hundred times, because this entire coast is more exposed to the currents and waves of the sea at high tide than any other. The dykes are formed by two rows of enormous piles, joined by heavy cross-beams of timber, the whole covered with large flat-headed nails, which preserve the wood from the small marine animals that corrode it. Between these piles there are very strong planks, or rather huge beams sawn in two and driven into the sand, one beside another. Behind these there is a wall of cyclopean masses of red granite brought from the province of Drenthe, and behind this wall a stout enclosure of stakes which would suffice to hold back the waters of a furious torrent. Along this dyke runs a pleasant, shady avenue which serves as a public walk, from which there is a view of the sea, a few houses, and some masts which project above the roofs. When we passed along it the horizon toward the west was still glowing, but it was very dark in the opposite quarter; there was no movement in the port and no boats on the sea; we met four girls walking arm in arm, chattering and laughing: one of them turned round to look at us, then they disappeared; the moon peeped

from behind a cloud, a cold wind was blowing, and we walked on in silence. "Are you sad?" asked my companion. "Not at all," I answered, and yet I was. But why? Who can tell? Even now that place and that moment remain impressed upon my memory. I close my eyes and it all returns to me, and I smell the salt air of the sea.

My companion took me to a club, where we remained until the train left for Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland. He was the first Frisian with whom I had the honor of speaking, and I studied him. He was fair, erect, and serious, like almost all Hollanders, but his eyes were exceedingly bright and expressive; he spoke little, but his few words were uttered with a rapidity and force from which one might infer that his was a much livelier nature than that of his compatriots on the opposite side of the Zuyder Zee. Our conversation turned upon ancient Frisia and ancient Rome, and was highly agreeable, for he began speaking of the events of those days most seriously, as if they had happened a short time ago, and I drew him on until we settled down to a discussion as if he were a Frieslander of the time of Olennius and I a Roman of the time of Tiberius, each taking his country's part. I taunted him with the crucifixion of the Roman soldiers, and he answered me calmly: "You were the aggressors, because so long as you contented yourselves with taking the tribute of hides imposed by Drusus we did not resist,

Corn Market Gate, Kampen.



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but we rebelled because Olennius was no longer satisfied with hides, and wanted our oxen, meadows, children, and women, and this meant ruin. *Pacem exuere* says Tacitus, *nostra magis avaritia quam obsequii impatientes*, and he adds that Drusus had imposed a light tribute because we were poor—*pro angustia rerum.* And if you stole the oxen and land from the poor, what did you do to the rich?" When I perceived that he knew Tacitus by heart, I beat a retreat, and asked him amicably if he felt a grudge against me because of the arrogance of my forefathers. "Oh, sir," he answered, extending his hand, as if I had asked him the question seriously, "not the slightest!" Unless I am much mistaken—I said to myself—even the shadow of such frankness could not be found in our country. And I could not take my eyes off him, he seemed cast in a mould so utterly different from ours.

We talked together until night, when he accompanied me to the railway-station, after which he was going to a concert. In that little city of sailors, fishermen, and butter-merchants a concert was being given by four artists, two Germans and two Italians, who had come expressly from the Hague to play for a couple of hours at the price of two hundred and fifty florins. Where this concert could be given in a town built like Harlingen of liliputian houses was more than I could understand, unless the players stayed in the house and the audience stood in the streets; and I asked my companion for an explana-

tion. "There is one house large enough," he answered. One? thought I; where is that colossal house which I have not seen? We crossed several dimly-lighted streets, which were rather more densely populated than the others, and arrived at the station. "We shall never meet again," said the frank, charming Frieslander. "Probably not," I answered. We stood looking at each other for a moment, then we both simultaneously said "Farewell!" and with this melancholy word we separated, he going to the concert and I to the interior of Friesland.

Friesland is a great plain, the soil being a mixture of sand, clay, and peat. The country is low everywhere, particularly toward the west, where at the end of autumn the sea not unfrequently inundates great tracts. There are a number of lakes which form a chain across the province from the town of Stavoren as far as Dokkum. The country is covered with extensive meadows and furrowed in every direction by wide canals, beside which, nine months in the year, graze innumerable herds of cattle, untended either by shepherds or dogs. Along the North Sea there are small mounds called *terpen*, which were raised by the ancient inhabitants as a refuge for themselves and their herds at high tide. On some of these heights villages are built. Other villages and towns are built on piles on the ground which has been rescued little by little from the sea. The

province contains two hundred and seventy-two thousand inhabitants, who not only make a living, but grow rich, from the sale of butter, cheese, fish, and peat, inasmuch as communication is easy by means of the canals and lakes. The few trees which hide the country-houses and villages, the sails of boats, the flights of lapwings, rooks, and crows, and the noble herds of cattle that dot the green country with black and white spots,—these are the only objects that meet the eye on that vast plain, where the horizon is perpetually veiled by a white mist. Man, who in this country has done everything, is nowhere seen. It seems to be a country in which the water lives and works by itself, and where the land belongs to the animals.

I arrived at Leeuwarden in the middle of the night, and fortunately found a hotel where French was spoken.

The next morning, very, very early—I believe before there were a hundred people awake in all the town —I went out and wandered about the deserted streets in a heavy, icy rain that chilled me to the bone.

Leeuwarden looks like a large village. The streets, which are very broad, are crossed by wide canals, and have on either side rows of tiny houses painted pink, lilac, gray, and light green; indeed, all the Broek colors are represented. The interior canals join those of the exterior, which extend along the ramparts of the city, and are connected with other

canals leading to the villages and neighboring towns. There are squares and cross-roads like those of a large city, and they seem all the larger because of the small size of the houses, in many of which the windows are but a few inches from the ground, while the tops of their frames almost touch the roof. If one were to heap up entire blocks of houses, they would not form a building of ordinary size. It is a very quaint, primitive town, founded by a population of fishermen and shepherds, which little by little has been rebuilt, painted, and refined. But, notwithstanding the fine bridges, the rich shops, and ornamented windows, its general appearance is so foreign to a southern European that it seems to him incongruous to see the inhabitants wearing frock-coats and silk hats like the rest of us. Of all the cities in the Netherlands, this is the one in which an Italian feels farthest away from his own country. The streets were deserted, all the doors were closed, and I seemed to be walking about an unknown and abandoned town which I had discovered. I looked at those strange houses, and said to myself, with surprise, that inside of them there must be elegant ladies, pianos, books that I had read, maps of Italy, and photographs of Florence and Rome. As I went from street to street I found myself in front of the ancient castle of the governors of Friesland, of the house of Nassau Diez, the ancestors of the reigning family of Orange, and I discovered a most curious

prison, a white and red palace, surmounted by a very high roof and decorated by small columns and statues, which give it the appearance of a princely villa. Finally, I came out into a large square, where I saw an old brick tower, about the foot of which they say that five hundred years ago the waters of the sea flowed, and it is now more than ten miles from the coast. Thence I returned to the centre of the town, passing through streets as clean as parlors and between two rows of houses whose eaves I touched with my umbrella.

In my whole walk the only females I had seen were a few dishevelled, sleepy old women looking at the weather from their windows, and it can be imagined how curious I was to see the others, not so much for the sake of their celebrated beauty as for the strange covering they wear on their heads, which I had heard discussed, and of which I had read descriptions and seen pictures in every town in Holland. On the previous evening, on arriving at Leeuwarden, I had seen here and there some women's heads which seemed to glitter, but I had given them only a passing glance, without paying them especial attention. It would be quite another thing to observe all the fair sex of the capital of Friesland in full daylight at my leisure. But how could I gratify my curiosity? The sky looked as if it would rain all day; probably the women would all remain shut up in their houses, and I should have to wait until the

next morning. Impatience was devouring me. Luckily, there came into my head one of those bright ideas which on great occasions present themselves to the dullest brains. I saw a musician of the National Guard pass wearing his gala head-dress and carrying his trumpet under his arm, and I remembered that it was the anniversary of the King of Holland's birthday. At once it occurred to me that if the band met it would parade around the town, and that where it passed the women would look out, and therefore by putting myself near the head of the procession, like the street-boys who accompany the regiments to drill, I could see what I desired to see. "Bravo!" I cried to myself; and, humming the air of the "*Che invenzione prelibata*" from the "Barber of Seville," I followed the musician. We arrived at the great square, where the National Guard, undaunted by the heavy rain, was assembling in the midst of a crowd of curious people. In a few minutes the battalion was formed, the major gave a shrill shout, the band began to play, and the column of soldiers moved toward the centre of the city. I walked beside the drum-major in great glee.

The windows of the first houses opened, and some women showed themselves with their heads all shining with silver, as if they wore helmets; and in fact they wore two large silver plates which completely hid their hair and covered part of their forehead, like the casque of an ancient warrior. A little further on

other women appeared at the windows, some wearing silver, some golden, helmets. The battalion turned down one of the principal streets, and then at every door, at every window, at every street-corner, before every shop, behind every garden-gate, appeared golden and silver helmets, some small, some large, with or without veils, as bright and shining as if they were part of a suit of armor. There were mothers in the midst of a bevy of daughters, tottering grand-dames, servants holding saucepans, young ladies who had just left the pianoforte,—all wore helmets. Leeuwarden seemed to be an immense fortress garrisoned by beardless cuirassiers, a metropolis of deposed queens, a city whose population was preparing for a grand mediæval masquerade. I cannot describe the astonishment and pleasure I felt. Every new helmet that appeared seemed to me the first I had seen, and made me smile with delight. I thought that the drummers, the National Guardsmen, and the street-boys who surrounded me ought to smile too. All those helmets threw golden and silver reflections on the windows and the varnished shutters, glittered confusedly in the gloom of the darkened rooms on the ground-floor, appeared and disappeared, glimmered behind the transparent curtains and the flowers on the window-sills. As I passed the girls on the pavement I slackened my pace and saw the trees, the shops, the windows, the sky, the National Guard, and my own face reflected on their heads. In the midst of

all these amiably terrible heads, on which not a lock of hair was seen, I, with my silk hat and long hair, seemed to be a despicable man unfit for war, and half expected that at any moment one of those austere Frieslanders might present me with a spindle and distaff in sign of derision. But what campaign are all these women meditating? I said to myself in jest. With whom are they going to war? Whom do they wish to alarm? At every step I saw some curious scene. A boy to tease a little girl was breathing on her helmet, while she cleaned it directly with her sleeve, scolding him angrily all the time, like a soldier whose companion has soiled some part of his uniform a moment before he is reviewed by his captain. A young man from a window with the tip of his cane tapped upon the helmet of a girl who was looking out of a neighboring window; the helmet resounded, the neighbors turned, and the girl disappeared blushing. At the bottom of a passage a servant was arranging her helmet, using as a looking-glass the head-dress of her companion, who was bending down before her. In the vestibule of a house which must have been a school fifty girls, all with helmets, were arranging themselves, two by two, in silence, like a troop of soldiers preparing to make a sortie against a rebellious populace. And in every new street through which the band marched fresh legions turned out to reinforce this strange, charming army.

At first I was so absorbed in the contemplation of

the helmets that I scarcely noticed the faces of the Friesland women, who are considered the prettiest in the Netherlands, and are said to descend in a direct line from the ancient sirens of the North Sea, and to have entranced Bismarck, the great chancellor of the German Empire—a man who is not very susceptible by nature. Having recovered from my first surprise at the helmets, I began to consider the ladies themselves, and I must say that here, as in other countries, I saw very few beautiful ones, but these few were truly worthy of their fame. As a rule, they are tall, broad-shouldered, fair, straight as the palm, and serious as ancient priestesses. Some have very small hands and feet, and, in spite of their gravity, they smile with such sweetness that it seems to be a distant reflection of their fabled progenitors. The silver helmet, which, by binding and concealing the hair, deprives them of the most beautiful ornament of beauty, makes up partly for this defect by showing the noble shape of their heads and by lending to their complexions certain white and azure tints which are inexpressibly delicate. To all appearance they are not in the least coquettish.

I was very curious to observe one of those pretty helmeted heads close by, that I might see how the head-dress was made and how it was put on, and might learn what rules govern the wearing. With this object in view I had procured a letter to a family in Leeuwarden. I presented it, and was received

most politely in a small house at the edge of a canal. As soon as we had exchanged greetings I asked to see a helmet—a request which made my hosts laugh, as it is invariably the first made by a stranger who arrives in Friesland of the first Frieslander whom he has the good fortune to meet. In response the mistress of the house, a charming, refined lady, who spoke French well, rang the bell, and at once a girl appeared wearing a golden helmet and a lilac-colored dress. The mistress beckoned to her to come nearer. She was a servant—a girl as tall as a grenadier, as strong as an athlete, as fair as an angel, and as proud as a princess. She quickly understood my curiosity, and stopped in front of me with her head erect and her eyes cast down. Her mistress told me that her name was Sophia, that she was eighteen years old, that she was engaged to be married, and that her helmet had been given to her by her fiancé.

I asked of what metal the helmet was made.

"Of gold," answered the lady, with evident surprise at my question.

"Of gold!" I exclaimed, equally surprised. "Excuse me; will you allow me to ask how much it cost?"

The lady spoke to Sophia in Frisian, and then, turning to me, she answered, "It cost three hundred florins without the pins and chain."

"Six hundred francs!" I exclaimed. "Excuse me once again; will you tell me what is her fiancé's business?"

"He is a wood-sawyer," answered the lady.

"A sawyer!" I repeated, and I thought with horror of the thickness of the book I should have to write before I could surpass that sawyer in generosity.

"However," continued the lady, "they do not all have golden helmets. The young men who have little money give silver ones. Poor women and girls wear them of gilded copper or of very thin silver, which cost only a few florins. But their great ambition is to have a gold helmet, and with this object they work, save, and sigh for years. And as to the jealousy aroused, I know something about that, for my chambermaid has a silver helmet and my cook a gold one."

I asked whether ladies also wore the helmets. She answered that they wear them very little now, but that all, even the members of the best families, remember to have seen their grandmothers and mothers wear helmets that were chased and studded with diamonds and cost ruinous prices. In olden times they did not wear helmets, but a sort of very thin diadem of silver or iron, which little by little was widened until it covered all the front of the head. All fashions begin to decline when they become exaggerated, and now the helmets too are disappearing. The women are beginning to regret that they do not show their fine fair hair. Moreover, the helmet has the disagreeable effect of hastening baldness, so that many women, even among the young, have frightful

bald patches on their heads. Doctors, on their part, say that the continual pressure on the skull does harm to the bosom, and many affirm that it arrests its development; which is quite likely, for, in fact, the Frisian women, although they are strong and healthy in appearance, are very flat-chested. All these reasons have induced a number of the ladies of the province of Groningen, where this head-dress is also worn, to form a society against the custom, and they have been the first to discontinue it, and thus have persuaded many others to do so. It will, however, be a long time before all the helmets disappear. The servants, the peasant-women, and the greater part of the middle class still wear them. The custom has its defenders and opponents. The latter gain ground slowly, but the former defend themselves obstinately.

I greatly wished to examine Sophia's helmet, but it was covered by the usual lace veil, and I did not dare ask her to take it off. I took the veil by the hem with the tips of my fingers, and, explaining myself by gestures, asked if I might raise it.

"Pray do so," said the lady, translating the girl's answer.

I raised it.

Heavens, what whiteness! I compared her neck, which was uncovered, with the veil in my hand, and I could not decide which was the whiter.

Sophia's helmet was very different from the silver head-dresses I had seen in the street; in fact, to tell

Friesland Peasant Woman.



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the truth, the name of "helmet" ought to be given only to the golden ones, since the others, although they seem like helmets to one looking at them from the front, are really of a different shape. The silver ones are made of two plates almost circular, joined by a flexible metal hoop, which passes behind the crown of the head, and is ornamented by two large chiselled buttons which stand out upon the temples. These two bands cover only the front part of the head. The golden helmets, on the other hand, consist of a very wide circle which covers the whole of the head excepting the crown, and grows wider toward the edge, leaving only a tiny piece of the forehead visible The plate of metal is as thin and flexible as Bristol-board, so that it can easily be made to fit different heads. Under these helmets, whether they are of gold or silver, black caps are worn, which confine the hair like a night-cap, and over the helmets are thrown lace caps which reach to the shoulders. On this second cap many women place an indescribable little hat trimmed with artificial flowers and fruits. Before noon, if at home or out on business, the common women wear the helmet only; the cap and hat are put on for the promenade.

While I was observing the girl's helmet the lady told me of some very curious customs still to be met with in the country districts of Friesland.

When a young man presents himself at a house to ask for the hand of a girl, she lets him know at once

whether she means to accept or decline his proposal. If she accepts him, she leaves the room, and immediately returns wearing her helmet. But if she returns without her helmet, it means that she does not like the young man and will not become his queen. Lovers usually give to their fiancées garters on which are written verses and words of love and good wishes for their happiness. Sometimes the enamored youth presents the girl with a knotted handkerchief, with inscriptions on the knot and money or some pretty gift within. If the sweetheart unties the knot, it means that she accepts the young man; if she does not untie it, the understanding is that she means to refuse him. The greatest honor for the swain is to be allowed to tie the sandals or wooden shoes of his goddess, who repays this courtesy with a kiss. In general, however, the young men and maidens are allowed the greatest liberty. They go out walking together as though they were husband and wife, and often sit for hours together in the house at night after their fathers and mothers have gone to bed. "And do they never repent having gone to bed too early?" I asked. "If there is error it is always remedied," the lady answered.

During all this conversation the handsome Friesland girl stood serious and immovable as a statue. Before she went out, to thank her with a compliment, I told her that she was one of the most beautiful of the warrior-women of Friesland, and begged her mis-

tress to translate my words. She listened quite seriously, blushed to the roots of her hair, and then, as if she had thought better of it, she smiled slightly, made a half courtesy, and left the room as slowly and majestically as a tragedy queen.

Thanks to the courtesy of my hosts, I visited a small museum of the national antiquities of Friesland which was formed only a few years ago, and already possesses many precious objects. I do not know much about these things—I merely glanced at the coins and medals—but I lingered long in front of the ancient wooden skates, the rough diadems which were the originals of the helmets, and before certain curious pipes found very deep down in the earth, which seem to antedate the use of tobacco and are believed to have been used for smoking hemp. But the greatest curiosity in the museum is a woman's hat, like those worn at the close of the last century—a hat so absurd and ridiculous that if the antiquary who showed it to me had not assured me that he had seen one like it not many years ago on the head of an old lady at Leeuwarden on the occasion of a fête in honor of the arrival of the King of Holland, I should have thought it impossible that reasonable creatures could ever have put such things upon their heads. It was not a hat; it was a tent, a canopy, a roof, under which a whole family might have taken shelter from the rain or sun. It was composed of a circle of wood twice as large as an ordinary coffee-table, and of a straw hat which had

a brim of the same size, although it was narrower on one side, so that it had the form of a semicircle. The circle was ornamented by a deep fringe and had a small opening in the middle for the head, but how it was fastened on I do not know. When the circle was fastened, the hat, which is quite separate, was placed upon it and covered it like the awning of a shed; then the edifice was complete. When the wearer entered a church she took this edifice to pieces, so as not to take up too much room, and rebuilt it again on going out. And the hat was considered pretty and the operation very convenient! How true is the proverb, "Every one to his taste"!

Another polite Frieslander, to whom I was recommended by a friend at the Hague, took me into the country to see the peasants' houses. We directed our steps toward the town of Freek, across one of the most fertile districts of Friesland, passing along a beautifully paved street as clean as a Parisian boulevard, and arrived after a short walk at a house before which my companion stopped and said in a serious tone, "Behold the *friesche hiem* of the Friesland peasant, the ancient heritage of his fathers." It was a brick house with green blinds and white curtains, encircled with trees and placed in the midst of a garden surrounded by a ditch full of water. Near the house was a hayloft built of gigantic beams of Norwegian pine and covered by an enormous roof of canes. In the barn were the stables protected by a

stout wooden partition. We entered the stable. As in North Holland, the cows had no litter and were yoked two by two, with their tails tied to the beams of the ceiling, to keep them from getting dirty. Behind the cows there was a deep running streamlet which carried away any impurity. The pavement, the walls, and the animals themselves were very clean, and there was no unpleasant odor. While I was examining every detail of this drawing-room for animals, my companion, who was a learned agriculturist, was giving me valuable information in regard to agriculture in Friesland. On a farm of from eighty-five to one hundred acres they usually keep a horse and seventy cattle. There is a milch-cow for every two acres, and on almost every large farm they keep eight or ten large sheep, from whose milk they make small cheeses, which are sought after in all the towns of Friesland as a great delicacy. But in Friesland the principal product is not cheese, as in North Holland, but butter. The room where the butter is made is the sacred recess of the peasant's house. We were allowed to enter, but it was a great concession, as outsiders are generally requested to halt on the doorstep. The room, which was as clean as a temple and as cool as a grotto, contained several rows of copper vessels filled to the top with fresh milk, already covered with thick cream. The churn was run by horse-power, as is customary throughout nearly all Friesland. On one wall hung a thermometer, the

windows were curtained, and there was a beautiful pot of hyacinths on the window-sill. My companion told me that the Friesland butter is so exquisite that in the London market, where a great deal of it is sent, it is sold at high prices. Year by year, in the different provincial markets, from seven to eight million kilogrammes are collected. The butter is placed in little wooden firkins made of Russian oak, weighing about twenty or forty kilogrammes each, and these are taken to the municipal weighing-houses of the cities of Friesland. Here an expert examines, tastes, weighs, and seals them with the town seal. After this operation they are sent to Harlingen and put on a steamer, which carries them to the banks of the Thames. "This is our wealth," concluded the polite Frieslander, "and it consoles us for the lack of the oranges and palms which you, more favored by nature, possess." Apropos of oranges and butter, he told me that a Spanish general one day showed a Friesland peasant an orange and said proudly to him, "This is a fruit that our country produces twice a year!"—"And this," said the countryman, holding a pat of butter before his eyes, "is a fruit that our country produces twice a day!" The general was silenced.

The peasant who accompanied us permitted us to look into the room where his wife and daughter, one wearing a golden helmet and the other a silver one, were working seated at a little table. The room

seemed furnished especially to gratify the curiosity of strangers. It contained great cupboards of antique design, mirrors with gilded frames, Chinese porcelain, carved flower-vases, and silver ranged on shelves. "What you see is the least part," my companion whispered in my ear, noticing my look of astonishment. "These cupboards are full of linen, jewelry, and silk dresses, and some peasants have cups, plates, and coffee-pots of silver; others even have forks, spoons, and snuff-boxes of solid gold. They earn a great deal, live economically, and spend the fruit of their savings in luxuries." This explains the fact that in the smallest villages there are jewellers' shops such as are not to be found in many of the large European cities. There are peasants who buy coral necklaces that cost more than a thousand francs, and have more than ten thousand florins' worth of rings, ear-rings, brooches, and other trinkets in their chests. It is true they live economically during the greater part of the year, but on feast-days, on the occasion of a marriage, and during the *kermesses*, when they go to town to enjoy themselves, they put up at the best hotels, take the best boxes at the opera, and between the acts uncork many a good bottle of champagne. A countryman who has a capital of a hundred thousand francs is not considered at all rich, since very many are worth two or three hundred thousand, half a million, and even more.

The character of these country-people—and the

same may be said of all Frieslanders—is, by universal consent, manly, frank, and generous. "What a pity you are not a Frieslander!" they say to a person whom they esteem. They are proud of the nobility of their race, which they consider the first branch of the great Germanic family, and they boast that they are the only nation descending from that parent stock that has preserved its ancient name since the days of Tacitus. Many believe that their country was called Frisia from Frisio, the son of Alan, who was the brother of Mesa and nephew of Shem, and they pride themselves upon their ancient origin. The love of liberty is their dominant sentiment. "The Frieslanders," says their old code of laws, "will be free so long as the wind blows among the clouds and so long as the world endures." In fact, Friesland sends to Parliament the boldest members of the liberal party. The population, which is almost entirely Protestant, is very jealous of its faith, and no less so of its language, which has been adorned by a great popular poet and is everywhere cultivated with affection. The peasants, say the Frieslanders themselves, cite with particular pride the illustrious men who have been born under the Frieslander *hiem*—the two poets Gysbertus Japix and Salverda, the philologer Tiberius Hemsterhuys and his son Frans, the charming learned philosopher whom Madame de Staël called the Dutch Plato.

On the way to Leeuwarden we met several peas-

ants' carts drawn by those famous Friesland horses which are considered the best trotters in the world. They are black and full of life, with long necks and small heads. The finest of them are bred on the island of Ameland. Their endurance is marvellous, and they are trained for both working and driving, and, curiously enough in a country where everything else moves slowly, their phlegmatic masters make them go at a sharp trot even when they are drawing hay-carts and when there is no hurry. The horse-races, which are called *harddraveryen*, are a time-honored and characteristic spectacle in Friesland. In every small town a track is prepared, divided into two straight parallel courses, on which the horses race, two by two in succession, and then the winners race again until one has won all the races and so gained the prize. The people crowd to witness these races, and applaud vociferously, as they do at the skating-matches.

On our arrival at Leeuwarden I saw a most unexpected and beautiful sight, a peasants' wedding procession. There were more than thirty carriages, all shaped like shells, very high, covered with gilding and painted with flowers, and drawn by strong black horses. In each sat a peasant in his holiday best beside a rosy-cheeked young woman with a golden helmet and a white veil. The horses were trotting briskly, the young women were clinging to the arms of their companions and throwing sweetmeats to the

children along the road, their laces fluttering and their helmets flashing. The bridal train continued on its way, and disappeared like a fantastic cavalcade amidst a roar of laughter, the cracking of whips, and merry shouts.

During the evening in the city I amused myself by watching the women and girls with their shining heads as they passed the hotel, like an inspector-general at a review when the soldiers file past one by one with arms and baggage. I soon observed that they were all going the same way; so I followed the current, and found myself in a large square where a band was playing in the centre of a large crowd, in front of a building whose windows were all lighted, and from which every now and then gentlemen with white cravats looked out, who must have been at some official dinner. Although it was drizzling, the people stood there immovable: the women in the front row formed a large circle of helmets round the band, and, seen from a distance by the light of the street-lamps and through a mist, really looked like a company of cuirassiers on foot keeping back the crowd. While the band was playing some soldiers grouped in a corner of the square accompanied the music by singing, flourishing their caps, and hopping first on one leg and then on the other in the grotesque attitudes of Steen's and Brouwer's drunkards. The crowd looked on, and I suppose the sight was extremely beautiful and amusing

to them, for they were laughing heartily and standing on tip-toe, pointing, exclaiming, and applauding. I stopped now and then to look at some Frisian girl, who, when she saw I was observing her, would cast at me a warlike glance of defiance, and afterward I entered into conversation with a bookseller—a pleasant occupation in Holland, as the Dutch booksellers are generally well educated and courteous.

That night at the hotel I scarcely closed my eyes for a miserable bell-ringer, who, perhaps because he suffered from insomnia, took a barbarous pleasure in giving the sleeping town a concert of all Rossini's operas and all the popular airs of the Netherlands. I have not yet spoken of the mechanism of these aërial organs. Well, this is the way they work: the clock in the steeple sets a cylinder and a wheel in motion; the cylinder is furnished with pins like those of a hand-organ. To these pins, which are arranged as the melody requires, wires are attached, which raise the bell-clappers and the hammers which move them. When the hour strikes it is answered by a tune, but by taking away the cylinder one can play any tune one likes by means of springs moved by two key-boards, one of which is worked by the hands, the other by the feet. It requires considerable strength and is a great effort to play in this way, for some of the keys require a pressure equal to the weight of two pounds; yet the bell-ringers and others take such pleasure in this music that they play by

the hour together with a passion worthy of a more pleasant harmony. I do not know whether the bell-ringer at Leeuwarden played well or badly, but I am sure he must have had herculean muscles and an adoration for Rossini. After I had been put to sleep by *Il Barbiere*, I was awakened by *Semiramide;* then I dozed off again to the sound of *Othello* and opened my eyes to hear *Mose*, and so on. It was a struggle between us—vibrations of notes on his side and curses of malediction on mine. We both stopped at the same time in the middle of the night, and if we had made up our accounts I do not know which would have been creditor. In the morning I grumbled to the waiter, who, however, was one of those phlegmatic Dutchmen whose sweet slumbers I think no earthly or heavenly noise would disturb. I said to him, "Do you know that the music of your steeples is very troublesome?"—"Why," he answered innocently, "have you not observed that they possess every octave with its tones and semitones?"—"Really?" I said grinding my teeth. "Then the case is different; excuse me."

Early next morning I left for Groningen, carrying with me, notwithstanding the persecution of the music, a dear remembrance of Leeuwarden and of the few people I had met there. One thing, however, I regretted exceedingly, and that was that I had not seen the beautiful, daring, severe daughters of the North skate on the ice, for, as Alphonse Esquiros

Main Street, Leeuwarden.



UNIV. OF MICH.

says, "they pass by wrapped in a cloud and crowned with a nimbus of gold and lace, like the fantastic figures in a dream."

The first view of the Dutch plain awakens a vague pleasing sense of melancholy, and presents in its uniformity a thousand new and wonderful appearances that stimulate the imagination. It ends, however, in becoming tiresome and tedious, even to those who by nature are inclined to enjoy and understand its peculiar beauty. There always comes a day to the stranger travelling in Holland when he suddenly feels an irresistible wish for heights which will elevate his thoughts and raise his eyes; for curves along which his glance may leap, fall, and wander; for forms that his imagination can people by likenesses to lions' backs, human figures, profiles of faces, and outlines of buildings—which remind him of the hills, mountains, rocks, and cliffs of his own country. His thoughts and eyes become weary of roving over that boundless sea of verdure and losing themselves; they feel a need of summits, chasms, shadows, the blue sky, and the sunlight. Then the traveller has seen enough of Holland and longs impatiently for his own country.

I experienced this feeling for the first time on the road from Leeuwarden to Groningen, the capital of the province of the same name. Tired of looking through the mist at meadow after meadow and watching the endless chains of canals, I bundled myself up

in a corner of the carriage and abandoned myself to dream of the Tuscan hills and the slope of the Rhine, in the same way that Dante's *Maestro Adamo* recalled the streamlets of the Casentino. At a little station about halfway between the two cities a man entered the railway-carriage who at first sight seemed to be—and in fact was—a peasant. He was fair and corpulent—the color of damp cheese, as Taine says of the Dutch peasants—neatly dressed, with a large woollen scarf round his throat and a thick gold chain on his waistcoat. He gave me a benevolent look and seated himself opposite me. The train started. I continued to think of my hills, and now and then turned to look at the country in the hope of seeing some change in the landscape, but, seeing nothing but plains, I unconsciously made a movement of impatience. The peasant looked for some time at the country and at me, then smiled, and, pronouncing the words very distinctly, said to me in French, "Wearisome, is it not?"

I answered, hurriedly, no—that I was not at all wearied by it—that I liked the Dutch landscape.

"No, no," he answered smiling; "it is tiresome; it is all level, and," accompanying the words by a gesture with both hands, "there are no mountains."

After some moments, which he employed in translating his thoughts mentally, he asked, pointing at me with his finger, "From what country?"

"From Italy," I answered.

"Italy?" he repeated, smiling. "Are there many mountains?"

"A great many," I replied, "enough to cover all the Netherlands."

"I have never seen a mountain in my life," he continued, pointing to himself; "I do not know what they are like—not even the hills of Gelderland."

A peasant who spoke French was a novelty to me, but a man who had never seen a mountain or a hill seemed to me a marvellous creature. Consequently I began questioning him, and drew some strange facts from his mouth.

He had never been farther than Amsterdam, and had never seen Gelderland, the only mountainous province in the Netherlands, and consequently he had no idea of a mountain, excepting from pictures and illustrations seen in books. He had never raised his eyes to any greater height than the steeples and the tops of the dunes. There are thousands of Dutchmen like him who say, "I should like to see a mountain," just as we say, "I should like to see the Egyptian pyramids." He told me, in fact, that soon he was going to see the Wiesselschebosch. I asked him what the Wiesselschebosch was, and he answered that it was a mountain in Gelderland near the village of Apeldoorn, and one of the highest in the country. "How high is it?" asked I.

"One hundred and four metres," he answered.

But the good man had fresh surprises in store for me.

After a few moments he asked me again, "Italy?"

"Italy," I repeated.

He stopped to think, then said, "The law on obligatory education was defeated, was it not?"

"Zounds!" said I to myself; "we shall hear next that he subscribes to the Official Gazette." In fact, a few days before the Chamber had rejected the proposed law on obligatory instruction.

I told him the little I knew about it.

After a short time he smiled, and it seemed to me that he was trying to form a sentence, then he asked:

"Does Garibaldi still continue"—here he imitated the action of digging, and then continued—"on his island?"

Another surprise! "Yes," I answered, and stared at my companion, hardly believing he was a peasant, and yet there was no doubt of it.

He was silent a while, and then added, pointing at me with his finger, "You have lost a great poet."

This last sentence almost made me jump from my seat.

"Yes, Alessandro Manzoni," I answered, "but how in the world do you know all these things?"

In a moment he will be asking me about the unity of language, I thought. "Tell me," I said, "do you happen to know Italian?"

"No, no, no," he answered shaking his head and laughing—"not at all, not at all."

After this he continued to laugh and puzzle his

brains, and I thought he must be preparing some great surprise for me. Meanwhile the train was approaching Groningen. When we were in the station the good man took up his parcel, looked at me with a new smile, and, marking each syllable with his forefinger, said to me in Italian, with a pronunciation impossible to describe and with the air of one who is making a great revelation, "Nel mezzo."

"Nel mezzo?" I asked him in astonishment. "In the middle of what?"

"Nel mez-zo del cam-min di no-stra vi-ta," he said with great emphasis, and jumped down from the carriage.

"One moment!" I cried. "Listen! One word! How in the world—"

He had disappeared.

Did you ever hear of such a people as the peasants of Holland? And I can take my oath that I have not exaggerated by one word.

GRONINGEN.

GRONINGEN.

GRONINGEN is perhaps, of all the Netherland provinces, the one that has been most marvellously transformed by the hand of man. In the sixteenth century the greater part of this province was as yet uninhabited. It was a gloomy country, covered with thickets, stagnant water, and stormy lakes, constantly inundated by the sea, infested by packs of wolves, and darkened by innumerable flights of sea-fowl, while no other sounds were heard but the croaking of frogs and the plaintive cry of deer. Three centuries of courageous and patient labor, often abandoned in despair, resumed with greater obstinacy, and finally brought to a happy completion through every kind of difficulty and danger, have transformed this savage and terrible region into a most fertile land, intersected by canals, dotted with farms and villas, where agriculture flourishes, labor is amply compensated, commerce thrives, and an active and intelligent population prospers.

Groningen, which in the last century was still a poor province, paying to the state half of the sum paid by Friesland and one-twelfth of that paid by

Holland proper, is now, in proportion to the extent of its territory, one of the richest provinces in the kingdom, and alone produces four-tenths of the wheat, barley, and colza grown in the Netherlands.

The most fertile part of Groningen is in the north, and its cultivation has been carried to such a degree that the only way to form an idea of it is to pass through the country. Although I have done this, I cannot better describe it than by joining my observations to the information derived from the people of Groningen and the descriptions of the French agriculturist, Count de Courcy, who, however, passed rapidly through the country, and of the Belgian, De Laveleye, the author of a fine work on the rural economy of the Netherlands.

The houses of the peasants are extraordinarily large, and almost all are two stories in height, and have many windows ornamented with rich curtains. Between the road and the house there is usually a garden planted with exotic trees and covered with flower-beds, and near the garden there is an orchard full of fine fruit trees and every kind of vegetable. Behind the house stands an enormous building which includes under one very high roof the cow-house, stable, and hay-loft, and large open mows which can hold a harvest of a hundred hectares. This building contains all kinds of English and American agricultural implements, many of which have been improved by these peasants,—there are long rows of cows, mag-

nificent black horses, and everything is marvellously clean.

The interior of these country-houses will bear comparison with the homes of many gentlemen. They contain furniture made of American wood, pictures, carpets, a piano, a library, political journals, monthly reviews, the latest works on agriculture, and sometimes the latest number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Although they are fond of luxury and an easy life, these countrymen have adhered to the simple habits of their fathers. The greater number, although they possess half a million francs, more or less, do not scorn to plough and direct in person the tilling of their fields. Some of them send one son to the university, which is not a small sacrifice, as they consider that a student costs his parents about four thousand francs a year; but most of them look down upon the professions of medicine, the law, and teaching, and wish all their sons to remain agriculturists. These peasants are the backbone of the country, and there is no more worthy class in Holland. From among them are chosen almost all the members of the different elective bodies, and even members of Parliament. The care of their farms does not keep them from taking an active part in political life and public government. Not only do they follow the progress of the agricultural art, but the advancement of modern thought as well. At Haven, near the city of Groningen, they maintain at their own

expense an excellent agricultural school, which is directed by an illustrious professor and attended by more than fifty pupils. Even the small villages have natural-history museums and botanical gardens which have been instituted and preserved at the expense of a few hundred peasants. The country-women on market-days visit the museums of the University of Groningen, and remain there a long time asking for information and instructing each other. Other peasants now and then take an educational trip to Belgium and England. The greater part of them occupy themselves with theological questions. Many belong to the sect of the Mennonites, who are the Dutch Quakers. De Laveleye recounts that, having seen four beautiful farms on the road that unites the two flourishing villages of Usquert and Uythuysen, he asked his host to whom they belonged, and he was answered that they belonged to four Mennonites. "They are very comfortably off," added his friend, "for each of them must have at least six hundred thousand francs."—"I have heard," continued De Laveleye, "that among the members of this sect there are no poor; is it true of this district?"—"No," his host answered, "and yet, to be just, it is true, for the only poor member died a few days ago, and now they have no poor." Pure manners, love of industry, and reciprocal charity banish poverty from these small religious communities, in which all know and guard over each other and give mutual

assistance. In short, Groningen is a sort of republic governed by a class of intelligent peasants—a new, virgin country, in which no patrician castle raises its head above the houses of the agriculturists, a province in which the soil produces and remains in the possession of those who make it productive; comfort and labor are everywhere united, and idleness and opulence are unknown.

But the description would be incomplete if I neglected to speak of the special right enjoyed by the Groningen peasants which is called *beklem-regt*, and is considered the principal cause of the extraordinarily prosperous condition of this province.

The *beklem-regt* is the right to occupy a farm by payment of an annual rent that the proprietor can never increase. This right passes to the collateral as well as to the direct heirs, and those who possess it can will or sell it, and even mortgage it, without the consent of the proprietor of the land. Every time, however, that this right passes into different hands, whether by sale or inheritance, the proprietor must receive one or two years' rent. The buildings on the farm generally belong to the holder of the *beklem-regt*, who, when his rents fall due, can demand the price of the materials. The possessor of the *beklem-regt* pays all the taxes, cannot change the shape of the property, and cannot diminish its value. The *beklem-regt* is indivisible. Only one person can possess it, and consequently only one of his heirs can

receive it. However, when the sum stipulated in case of the transference of the *beklem-regt* into other hands is paid, the husband can inscribe his wife and a wife her husband, and then the surviving consort inherits part of the right. When the tenant fails or does not pay the rent, the *beklem-regt* is at once annulled; his creditors can sell it, but those who buy it must first of all pay the proprietor all the outstanding debts.

Little is known of the origin of this hereditary farm-letting. It appears that it began in the Middle Ages, in Groningen, on the farms belonging to the convents. The land was then of little value, and the monks were glad to give a certain part of their possessions to cultivators on condition that they should pay them a certain annual rent and another sum whenever it was transferred. This contract assured to the convent a fixed income, and exempted it from occupying itself with farms which were generally unproductive. The example of the convents was afterward followed by proprietors of large tracts of land and by the civil corporations. They reserved to themselves the power of discharging the tenant every ten years, but did not avail themselves of this right, because by so doing they would have been obliged to pay the value of the buildings which had been erected on their land, and they could not easily have found another tenant. During the disturbances of the seventeenth century the right became hereditary: jurisprudence and habit determined the points that were

subjects of controversy, a clearer statement of the right was drawn up and generally accepted, and from that time the *beklem-regt* has been maintained side by side with the code of laws, and little by little it has become diffused over the whole province of Groningen.

It is easy to understand the advantages that result to agriculture from such a contract. By virtue of the *beklem-regt* the cultivators have the strongest interest in making every possible effort to increase the productiveness of their land, as they are sure of being the only ones to enjoy the fruits of all the improvements they introduce. They are not obliged, as tenants generally are, to pay a higher rent as they succeed in increasing the fertility of the land they cultivate. With these privileges they undertake the boldest enterprises, introduce the most arduous innovations, and carry out the costliest improvements. The legitimate recompense of labor is the certain and entire income resulting from that labor. Thus the *beklem-regt* has become a very strong stimulus to industry, study, and perfection.

Hence a curious custom descending from the Middle Ages has created a class of farmers who enjoy all the benefits of property, excepting that they do not reserve all the net profit, which probably would be just enough to dissuade them from tilling the soil. Instead of being tenants who are continually afraid of losing their land, opposed to every costly innova-

tion, subject to a master, and determined to conceal their prosperity, the people of Groningen enjoy the profits without being the proprietors: they are dignified, simple in their manners, eager for instruction, the value of which they thoroughly appreciate, and open to every improvement. They are a class of peasants who practise agriculture not as mechanical work and a despised profession, but as a noble occupation which requires the exercise of the highest faculties of intelligence, and procures them means, social standing, and public respect—country-folk who are economical in the present, lavish for the future, submissive to every kind of sacrifice to fertilize their land, to enlarge their houses, to acquire the best agricultural tools and the finest breed of animals; in short, a rural population contented with their condition, because their fortune depends only upon their own activity and foresight.

So long as the holder of the *beklem-regt* cultivates the land himself, this hereditary tenure produces only good effects. These good effects cease, however, when, taking advantage of his right to sub-let, he cedes to another the right of enjoying the usufruct of the farm for a given sum, with which he continues to pay the proprietor. In this case all the defects of the usual system are revived, with the difference that the sub-letting farmer has to maintain two idlers instead of one. Sub-letting was seldom heard of formerly, because the net profit of the farm barely sufficed to

support the family of the holder of the *beklem-regt* when he cultivated the farm himself. But since all farm produce has become dearer, and, above all, since the opening of trade with England, the profits are considerable—sufficient, indeed, for the holder of the *beklem-regt* to find a second tenant ready to pay him a higher rent than that which he has to pay to the proprietor. So the custom of sub-letting is beginning to spread, and if it becomes general in the future it will be attended by disastrous consequences.

Meanwhile, when we try to imagine what the future state of society will be, we generally desire these two things to occur: first, an increase in production; secondly, a division of wealth according to the principles of justice. One requirement of such justice is that the fruit of his own labor and improvements shall be assured to the laborer. Therefore it is consoling and pleasant to see an ancient custom, which in part responds to this economical ideal, established on the distant shores of the North Sea, and giving to all the province an extraordinary and equally-distributed prosperity.

A serious objection was raised to De Laveleye's opinions on this subject. He was asked whether the unexampled prosperity of Groningen was really due to the *beklem-regt*, to this hereditary farm-letting, which in other places had produced quite a different result, or whether it did not result rather from the exceptional fertility of the soil. De Laveleye an-

swered this objection by the statement that the same extraordinary prosperity and perfection of agriculture exists in the turf zone of Groningen, which is anything but fertile, and is not to be found again, except in a lesser degree, in Friesland, where the soil is of the same character. If hereditary farm-letting has not produced in other countries the same results that it has produced in Groningen, it is because in other countries it is conducted differently. An example of this is to be found in some provinces in Italy, where the *condotto di livello*, which is very much like a *beklem-regt*, fetters the liberty of the farmer by obliging him to furnish the proprietor every year with a given quantity of a particular product. All Dutch economists, he concludes, are agreed in recognizing the excellent effects of this custom, and affirm that Groningen owes its riches to the *beklem-regt*, and in the agricultural congresses where this question is discussed the desire prevails that the system shall be adopted in other provinces also.

I continued my excursion across the Groningen country, and arrived at the coast of the North Sea in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Dollart. This gulf did not exist before the thirteenth century. The river Eem flowed directly into the sea, and Groningen was joined to Hanover. The sea destroyed the boggy region which extended between the two provinces, and in the sixteenth century formed the gulf, which has been growing smaller every year by reason of the

mud which accumulates along its coasts. A great many dykes, built one in front of the other, already show the conquests of the land over the sea, and fresh gains are continually being made, which go on increasing the agricultural domain of Groningen, and one sees fields of barley and colza where a few years ago the waves dashed furiously and the boats of the fishermen were wrecked. From the top of the dykes that protect those coasts it is beautiful to see how sea and land meet, mingle, and are transformed. At the foot of the dyke there is a marshy tract, partly covered by grass and aquatic plants; a little farther on this changes to hardened mud, which is almost like earth; still farther on there is wet mud, which grows more and more liquid until it becomes thick, muddy water; and beyond this heaps of sand, some high enough to become dunes and islands. One of these islands, called Rottum, years ago was inhabited by a family who lived by seal-hunting. They tell odd stories of the other islanders—of mysterious hermits, apparitions, and monsters.

The pools of muddy water which extend to the foot of the dykes are called *wadden*, or polders in a state of formation. They consist of land now covered by the sea at high tide, but rising little by little as the currents of the Eem and Zuyder Zee deposit fresh strata of clay. During low tide herds of cattle wade across them, and in some places boats can pass; large flocks of sea-fowl descend upon them to eat the shell-

fish that the ebb tide leaves. In less than a century birds, bogs, boats, pools, marshes will all have disappeared, the islands will have become dunes protecting the coast, and agriculture will draw from this fresh field a fine luxuriant vegetation. Thus in this direction Holland advances victoriously into the sea, avenging its ancient injuries by the ploughshare and the blade of the scythe.

But, notwithstanding all that I have said, I should never have formed a conception of the riches of the Groningen country if I had not had the good fortune to see the Groningen market.

But before speaking of the market I must speak of the city itself.

Groningen, so called, as some assert, after the Trojan Grunio, and founded, according to others, a hundred and fifty years before the Christian era round a Roman fortress that Tacitus called *Corbulonis monumentum* (both of which statements have been affirmed and denied for several centuries without conclusive decision), is the most important town in Northern Holland in size and commerce, but it is perhaps the least interesting to a stranger.

It is situated on a river called the Hunse, at the junction of three great canals, which connect the city with several other commercial towns; it is surrounded by high ramparts, built in 1698 by Coehorn, the Dutch Vauban, and has a port which, although

The Market Square, Groningen.



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several miles distant from the mouth of the Eem, is capable of holding the largest merchantmen. Its streets and squares are very wide, its canals as large as those of Amsterdam, its houses are higher than those of almost any other Dutch town, its shops are worthy of Paris, in cleanliness it rivals Broek, and yet there is nothing strange about it either in form, color, or general appearance. On arriving there from Leeuwarden one seems to have come a hundred miles nearer home—to have re-entered Europe and to feel the air of Germany and France. The only singular objects in Groningen are certain houses covered with grayish plaster, encrusted with small pieces of glass, which when the sun strikes them shine with a bright light, so that the walls appear to be studded with pearls and silver nails. There is a fine municipal hall built during the French dominion, a market-square which is renowned as the largest in Holland, and a huge church, dedicated formerly to St. Martin, which presents noticeable signs of the different phases of the Gothic style of architecture, and has a very high steeple, which seems to be formed of five little towers placed one on the top of the other.

Groningen has a university, and on this account the neighboring cities have honored it by the name of Athens of the North. This university, located in a large new building, has only a small number of students, as the country-folk, who are the only rich

people in the province, seldom send their sons to study, and the rich gentlemen of Friesland are sent to the University of Leyden. Nevertheless, it is a university quite worthy of standing beside the other two. It contains a fine anatomical room, and a natural-history museum containing many precious treasures. The curriculum is much the same as that of the two other universities. There is, however, a marked difference in the spirit of the institution, for by reason of its proximity to Hanover the influence of Germany in science and literature is very strong, and the university has a religious character peculiar to itself. The theologians of Groningen, says Alphonse Esquiros in his *Studies on the Dutch Universities*, form a separate school in the intellectual movement of the Netherlands, which began about 1833 in the bosom of that most orthodox of orthodox towns, Utrecht. A professor of Utrecht, M. Van Heusde, sought to open a new horizon of religious belief; M. Hofstede de Good, a scholar of the Groningen University, shared his ideas and joined him, and thus was formed the nucleus of a theological society located in Groningen, which, rebelling against synodal Protestantism and formally disowning all human authority in religious matters, wished to institute a type of Christianity peculiar to the Netherlands—a type of which it would be difficult to give a clear idea, for the reason that the very persons who profess it and support it by their writings give but a dim outline

of their beliefs. In all these heterodox doctrines—which may be introduced into the country without grave peril, because in the continual flux of religious thought the usages, traditions, and forms of the old religion remain immovable—there is one serious and delicate point upon which the orthodox seek unsuccessfully to impale their adversaries: the divinity of Jesus Christ. Upon this point the thoughts of the heterodox are wrapped in obscurity. For them Jesus Christ is the most perfect type of humanity, the messenger of God, the image of God. But is He God in person? This question they avoid with every sort of scholastic subtilty. Some, for example, say they believe in His divinity, but not in His deity—an obscure answer which is almost equal to a denial. So we may consider the heterodox doctrines of the Hollanders as a sentimental deism more or less inclined to the poetical part of the Christian religion. However, the ardor of the religious controversy has been cooling for many years. The students of the University of Groningen occupy themselves more willingly with literature and science, and with this object they have formed societies before which lectures are delivered, and where especial attention is given to applied science—a bias which is one of the most noticeable characteristics of the Frieslanders, who have many points of resemblance to the people of Groningen, and are often closely related to them by family ties. The students of

Groningen are quieter and more studious than those of Leyden, who, so far as this is possible in Holland, have a reputation for being dissipated.

Besides the glory of the university, which dates from 1614, Groningen is renowned for having given birth to several illustrious artists and men of science, of whom it is delightful to hear Ludovico Guicciardini speak in his lively, polished style. He seems to have had a special weakness for this town. First of all he places Rudolph Agricola, "whom among other writers Erasmus in his works praises highly, saying that on this side of the mountains for literary talents there has never been a greater than he, and that no honest science exists in which he would not be able to hold his own against any one—amongst Greeks the greatest Greek, amongst Latins the greatest Latin, in poetry a second Virgil, in oratory a second Politian; a most eloquent advocate, a philosopher, a musician, an author of several worthy works, besides other rare gifts and virtues." Afterward he mentions "Vesellius, surnamed Basil, an excellent philosopher, full of doctrine, virtue, and every kind of science, as the many works he has written and printed attest; wherefore he has been called *the light of the world.*" He adds that for fear of not praising as they deserve this Vesellius and Agricola, who are "the two stars of Groeninghen," he prefers to be silent, and to leave a page blank for those who will be better able than he to exalt their names and

their country. In conclusion he cites the name "of another great man, also a citizen of the same land, called Rinerius Predinius, the most excellent author of several books worthy of the highest honor and praise." Besides these the famous Orientalist Albert Schultens, Baron Ruperda, Abraham Frommius, and others deserve mention.

To the eye of a stranger the people of Groningen differ little from the Frieslanders in dress and appearance. The chief difference is in the head-dress of the women. At Leeuwarden the greater number of the helmets are of silver; at Groningen they are all of gold, and are perfect in their shape, covering the entire head, but there are far fewer of them. The ladies no longer wear them; the rich peasant-women have also discarded them in imitation of the ladies; and now only the servants may boast of being the true descendants of the armed virgins who, according to the ancient German mythology, presided over battles.

In regard to their customs and manners I received from a citizen of Groningen some valuable information which is not to be found in any book of travels. There the conditions of girls and married women are totally different from those to be found in Italy. With us, a girl who marries leaves a life of subjection, almost of imprisonment, to enter upon a free life, in which she suddenly finds herself surrounded by the consideration, homage, and court of

people who neglected her before. There, on the contrary, liberty and gallantry are privileges belonging to girls, and married women live a retired life, restrained by a thousand regulations, bound by a thousand fears, surrounded by cold respect, and almost neglected. The young men devote themselves only to the girls, who enjoy great freedom. A young man who visits a family, even if he is not one of the most intimate friends, offers to take the daughters or one of the daughters to a concert or the theatre in a carriage at night without a chaperone, and no father or mother would think of objecting; and if they were to object they would be considered silly or ill-mannered, and would be ridiculed and censured. A young man and woman are often engaged to be married for years, and all the time they see each other every day, go out walking together, stay at home alone, and in the evening talk for a long time on the doorstep before separating. Girls of fifteen belonging to the first families go quite alone from one end of the town to the other to and from school, even toward dusk, and no one notices where they stop or to whom they speak. However, if a married lady takes the least liberty, people never stop talking of it, but this is such a rare occurrence that one may say it never happens. "Our young men," this gentleman said, "are not at all dangerous. They know how to pay court to the girls because the girls are timid, and this timidity encourages them, but with

married ladies they do not know what to do. To my knowledge there have been only two notorious scandals in this city;" and he mentioned the cases. "So it is, my dear sir," he continued, slapping my knee with his hand, "that here the only conquests we make are in agriculture, and those who desire another field must affirm before a notary that they mean to fight according to the fair laws of war and to end with an honorable peace." Arguing falsely from my silence that such a condition did not please me, he added, "Such is our way of living—tedious perhaps, but wholesome. You drain the cup of life at a gulp; we sip it leisurely. Perhaps you enjoy it more at moments, but we are continually content."—"God bless you!" I said. "God convert you!" he responded.

Let us now return to the market, which was the last lively spectacle that I saw in Holland.

Early in the morning I walked about the city to see the peasants arrive. Every hour a train came in, from which a crowd poured forth; by every country road carriages of many colors drove in, drawn by fine black horses, bringing to the city majestic married couples; from every canal sail-boats arrived laden with goods; and in a few hours the town was full of people and business. The men were all dressed in dark clothes, and had large woollen cravats round their necks; they wore gloves and watch-chains, and each had a large purse of Russian leather, a cigar in his mouth, and an open, contented countenance. The

women were bedecked with flowers, ribbons, and jewels, like the Madonnas of the Spanish churches. When their business is transacted these good people congregate in the coffee-houses and shops—not as our peasants, who look round timidly as though they are asking for permission to enter, but with the manner and looks of persons who know that they are everywhere desired and welcome guests. In the restaurants their tables are covered with bottles of Bordeaux and Rhine wine, and in the shops the salesmen hasten to show them their goods. The women are received like princesses, and in fact buy in a princely way. Such scenes as these are often enacted, as I heard from eye-witnesses: A merchant tells a city lady the price of a silk dress. "Too dear," answers the lady. "I will take it," says a country-woman standing near, and she takes it. Another country-woman goes to buy a piano. The shopkeeper shows her one that costs forty pounds. "Have you none dearer?" she asks; "my friends all have pianos that cost forty pounds." Husband and wife pass before the window of a print-store and see a fine oil painting of a landscape in a gilded frame; they stop, discover a slight resemblance to their house and farm, and the wife says, "Shall we buy it?" The husband answers, "Let us do so." They enter the shop, heap up three hundred florins on the counter, and carry the picture away with them. When they have made their purchases they go to see the museums, they enter the

restaurants to read the papers, and take a turn round the town, casting glances of pity at all the shopkeepers, clerks, professors, officers, and proprietors, who in other countries are envied by those who till the soil, while here they are considered as poor people. Any one who did not know how matters stand would think on seeing this sight that he had chanced upon a country where a great social revolution had suddenly transferred the wealth from the palace to the cottage, and that the new plutocrats had come in from the country to laugh at the despoiled gentlefolk. But the evening is the finest sight of all. Then the country-folk return to their villages and farms, and curious vehicles are seen on every road, whirling along at the top of their speed, trying to pass each other, the women spurring on the horses to win the race, the winners cracking their whips triumphantly, the air echoing with song and laughter, until the jolly crowd disappears in the endless green of the country with the last glow of the sunset.

FROM GRONINGEN TO ARNHEM.

FROM GRONINGEN TO ARNHEM.

At Groningen I turned my back upon the North Sea, my face to Germany, and my heart to Italy, and began my return journey, rapidly crossing the three Dutch provinces, Drenthe, Overyssel, and Gelderland, which extend along the Zuyder Zee between the provinces of Utrecht and Friesland, a part of Holland which if crossed slowly would be tedious to any one who was travelling without the curiosity of a farmer or a naturalist, but which seen in rapid travel leaves an indelible impression on the true lover of nature. Throughout my journey the gray monotonous sky was suited to the appearance of the country, and I was almost always alone. Thus I silently enjoyed the view in all its melancholy beauty.

On leaving the province of Groningen one enters Drenthe, and at once there is a sudden change in the appearance of the country. Here and there, as far as the eye can see, stretch vast plains covered with underwood, without roads, houses, streams, hedges, or any sign of human habitation or activity. The only vegetation that rises above the undergrowth are a few oak trees supposed to be the remnant of ancient forests; the only animals that indicate to travellers that

life still exists are partridges, hares, and wild-cocks. When one thinks the waste is at an end, another begins; thickets follow thickets, solitude succeeds to solitude. On this dreary plain there are many mounds, which, some believe, were raised by the Celts, others, by the Germans, in which by digging persons have found earthenware vases, saws, hammers, pulverized bones, arrows, beads, stones for grinding grain, and rings which may have been used as money. Besides these mounds there have been found, and are still to be seen, some huge masses of red granite heaped up and arranged in a form indicating that they were originally erected as monuments, such as altars or tombs, but they bear no inscriptions and stand naked and lonely, like enormous aërolites fallen in the midst of a desert. In the country they are called the tombs of the Huns, and tradition attributes them to the hordes of Attila: the people say that they were brought into Holland by a very ancient race of giants; geologists believe that they have been brought from Norway by antediluvian glaciers; historians lose themselves in vain conjectures. Everything is archaic and mysterious in this strange province. The life of primitive Germany, the common tillage of the soil, the rustic trumpet that calls the peasants to their work, the houses described by Roman historians,—are all found here in this old world over which broods the perpetual mystery of an immense silence,

" ove per poco
Il cor non si spaura."

As one continues along this road, after a while one begins to see marshes, great pools, zones of muddy earth crossed by canals of blackish water, ditches as long and deep as trenches, heaps of earth the color of bitumen, a few large boats, and a few human beings. These are the peat-fields, whose mere name conjures up before the mind a world of fantastic events—the slow immense conflagration of the earth, meadows floating on the waters of the ancient lakes full of animals and people, forests straying down the gulfs, fields detached from the continent and scattered by the sea-storms, immense clouds of smoke driven by the wind from the burnt turf-pits of Drenthe and sent halfway over Europe as far as Paris, Switzerland, and the Danube. Peat, "the living earth," as the Dutch peasants call it, is the chief source of the riches of Drenthe and Holland. No country contains more of it or makes a greater profit out of it. Almost all the people of Holland burn it in their stoves; it gives work to a large part of the population and serves innumerable uses. The sods are used to strengthen the foundations of the houses, the ashes to fertilize the ground, the soot to clean metal, the smoke to preserve herring. Boats freighted with this great national combustible may be seen everywhere—on the waters of the Waal, the Leck, the Meuse, on the Friesland and Groningen

canals, and about the Zuyder Zee. The exhausted turf-pits are converted into meadows, kitchen-gardens, and fertile oases. Assen, the capital of Drenthe, is the centre of this work of transformation. A large canal, into which all the small canals of the turf-pits discharge themselves, extends across almost the whole of Drenthe, from Assen to the town of Meppel. The Dutch are working everywhere to cultivate the land. The population of the province, numbering about thirty-two thousand inhabitants at the end of the last century, is now almost three times that number.

When Meppel is passed, one enters the province of Overyssel, which for a long distance presents much the same appearance as Drenthe—thickets, turf-pits, solitude. Presently one arrives at a village which is the strangest that human imagination can picture to itself. It consists of a row of rustic houses, with wooden fronts and thatched roofs, which are scattered along at some distance from each other over a space of eight kilometres. Every house is situated on a narrow strip of land which stretches away as far as the eye can see, and is surrounded by a ditch full of aquatic plants, on the edge of which are groups of alder trees, poplars, and ashes. The inhabitants of this village, which is divided into two parts, called Rouveen and Staphorst, are the descendants of two ancient Frisian colonies which have religiously preserved the dress, customs, and agricultural traditions of their fathers, and live comfortably

The Sassen-Poort, Zwolle.



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on the produce of the ground and some little industries of their own. In this singular village they have no coffee-houses and no chimneys, because their ancestors did not have them; there are no roads, because the houses are all in a straight row; in fact, there is nothing that is like any other village. The inhabitants are all austere, sober, hard-working Calvinists. The men make their own stockings in the spare time that remains to them after cultivating the ground, and abhor idleness to such a degree that when they go to a meeting of the village council they take with them their knitting-needles and yarn, in order that they may not sit with idle hands during the discussion. The commune possesses six thousand hectares of ground, divided into nine hundred strips about five thousand metres long and from twenty to thirty metres wide. Almost all the inhabitants are proprietors and know how to read and write. Every one keeps a horse and about ten cows. They never leave their colony; they marry where they are born, and pass their lives on the same strip of land and close their eyes under the same roof where their grandfathers and great-grandfathers lived and died.

As one penetrates into Overyssel the country changes. Zwolle, the birthplace of the painter Terburg, the capital of the province, a city of about twenty thousand inhabitants, is the town in which Thomas à Kempis, the presumed author of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, lived for seventy-four years,

dying in the little convent of Mount St. Agnes. It has beautiful streets, with rows of birch trees, beeches, poplars, and oaks on either side—a sight grateful to the eye after the bare melancholy country I had passed through. The thickets decrease everywhere; green hillocks are seen, meadows, new plantations, houses, herds of cattle, fresh canals which run from the turf-pits and flow into a large canal called the Dedemsvaart, the great artery of Overyssel, that has transformed that desert into a flourishing province, where an industrious population is advancing with the joy of a triumphat army—where the poor find work, the workman property, the proprietor riches, and all may hope for a brighter future. At this point the road skirts the Yssel and enters Salland, the Sala of the ancients, where dwelt the Franco-Salii before they turned south to conquer Gaul, and where the Salic law was originated at Saleheim and Windeheim, which still exist under the names of Salk and Windesheim. Here the traditions and agricultural methods of those early times still linger. Finally, Deventer is reached, the last city in Overyssel, the town of Jacob Gronovius, of carpets and ginger-bread. Here is still preserved the boiler in which the counterfeiters were boiled alive in the public weigh-house. Near by is the castle of Zoo, the favorite residence of the King of Holland. After passing Deventer one comes to Gelderland.

Here the scene changes. One is passing over the ground inhabited by the ancient Saxons, the Veluwe, a sandy region which extends between the Rhine, the Yssel, and the Zuyder Zee, where a few villages are lost in the midst of boundless undulating plains, which resemble a stormy sea. As far as the eye can see there are only arid hills, the most distant veiled by a bluish mist, the others clothed in part with the deep colors of a wild vegetation, in part whitened by the sand which the wind blows over the surface of the country. No trees or houses are seen; all is lonely, bare, and gloomy like the steppes of Tartary. The awful silence of this solitude is broken only by the song of the lark and the buzzing of the bee. Yet in some parts of this region the Dutch by their patience, courage, and infinite labor have succeeded in domesticating pines, beeches, and oaks, in making fine parks, creating an entire forest, and in less than thirty years covering more than ten thousand hectares of ground with productive vegetation, in establishing populous and flourishing villages where there was neither wood, stone, nor water, and where the first cultivators were obliged to live in caverns dug in the ground and covered with sods.

The road passes near the town of Zutphen, and soon arrives at Arnhem, the capital of Gelderland, a renowned and charming town situated on the right bank of the Rhine, in a region covered with beautiful hills which give it the name of the Dutch Switzer-

land. It is inhabited by a people considered the most poetical in Holland, and truly described by the proverb which runs, "Great in courage, poor in goods; sword in hand, behold my arms!" But in spite of this distinction, neither country nor people present anything remarkable to a visitor from the south of Europe who has gone to Holland to see Holland, and therefore all travellers pass them over quickly.

The same may be said of Limburg and North Brabant, the only two provinces of Holland which it seemed to me unnecessary to visit. So when I had seen the town of Arnhem, I departed for Cologne. The sky was darker and more threatening than it had been all day, and, although in my heart of hearts I was delighted to return to Italy, I felt oppressed by the gloomy weather, and, leaning on the window-sill of the railway-carriage, I looked at the landscape with the air of one who is leaving his fatherland instead of a foreign country. Without perceiving it, I almost had arrived at the German frontier, absorbed in the thought of the worries, doubts, fatigue, and discomfort I should have to endure for many months in the corner of my room writing these wretched pages, and it was not until a fellow-traveller told me that we were near the frontier that I saw we were still in Holland.

As my eyes wandered over the scene I still saw one windmill. The country, the vegetation, the

shape of the houses, the language of my fellow-travellers were no longer Dutch. I therefore turned to the windmill as a last image of Holland, and stared at it as intently as I had stared at the first one I had seen a year earlier on the banks of the Scheldt. As I gazed, I seemed to see something move within the spaces of its mighty arms: my heart beat rapidly. I looked more carefully, and in fact saw the flags of ships, linden trees along the canals, quaint pointed gables, windows decorated with flowers, silver helmets, the livid sea, the dunes, the fishermen of Scheveningen, Rembrandt, William of Orange, Erasmus, Barendz, my friends,—all the most beautiful and noblest visions of that glorious, modest, austere country; and, as if I actually saw them, I kept my eyes fixed on the mill with a feeling of tenderness and respect, until it seemed nothing but a black cross through the mist which enveloped the country, and when this final shadow disappeared I felt like one who as he departs on the voyage from which he will never return watches the figure of the last friend waving a farewell from the shore fade away from his sight.

THE END.

